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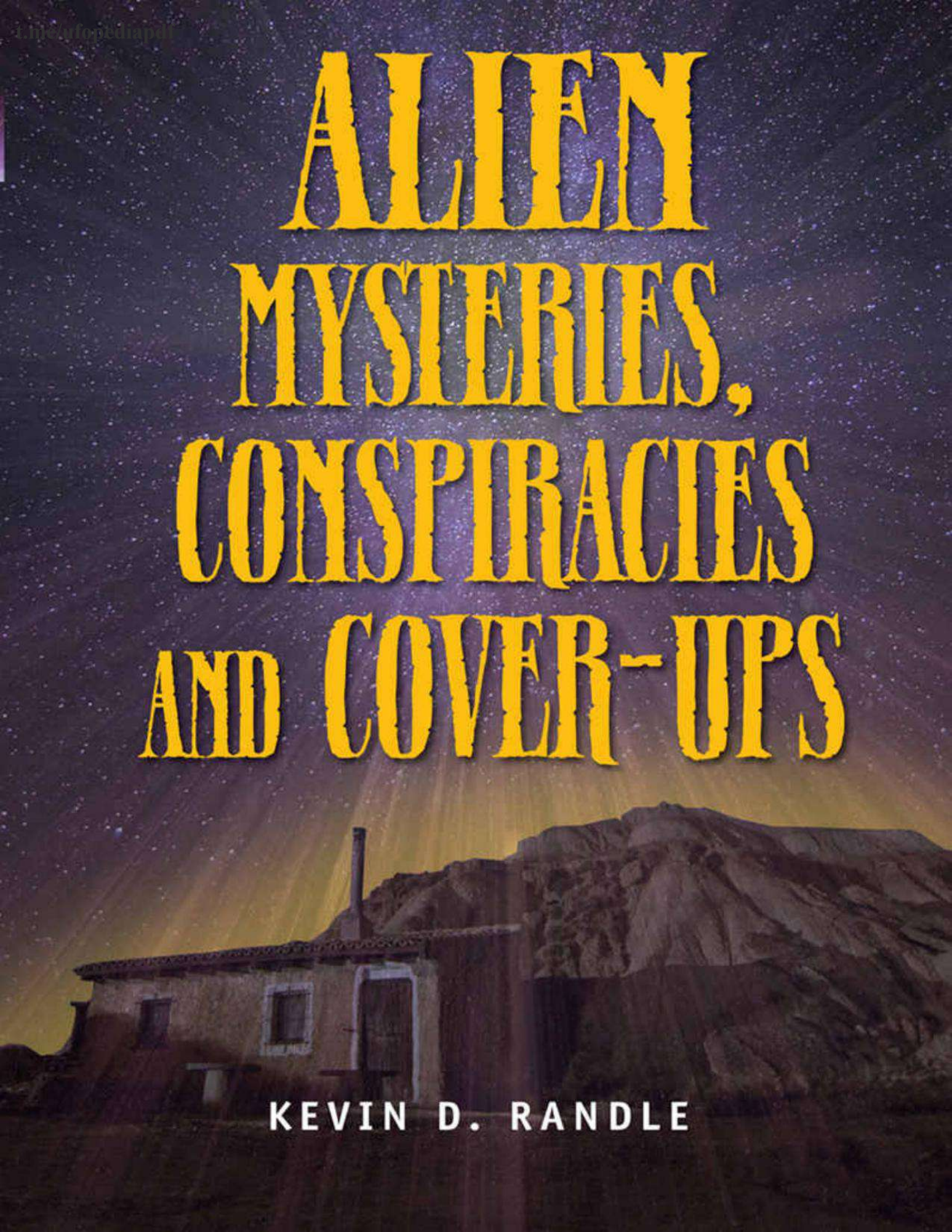
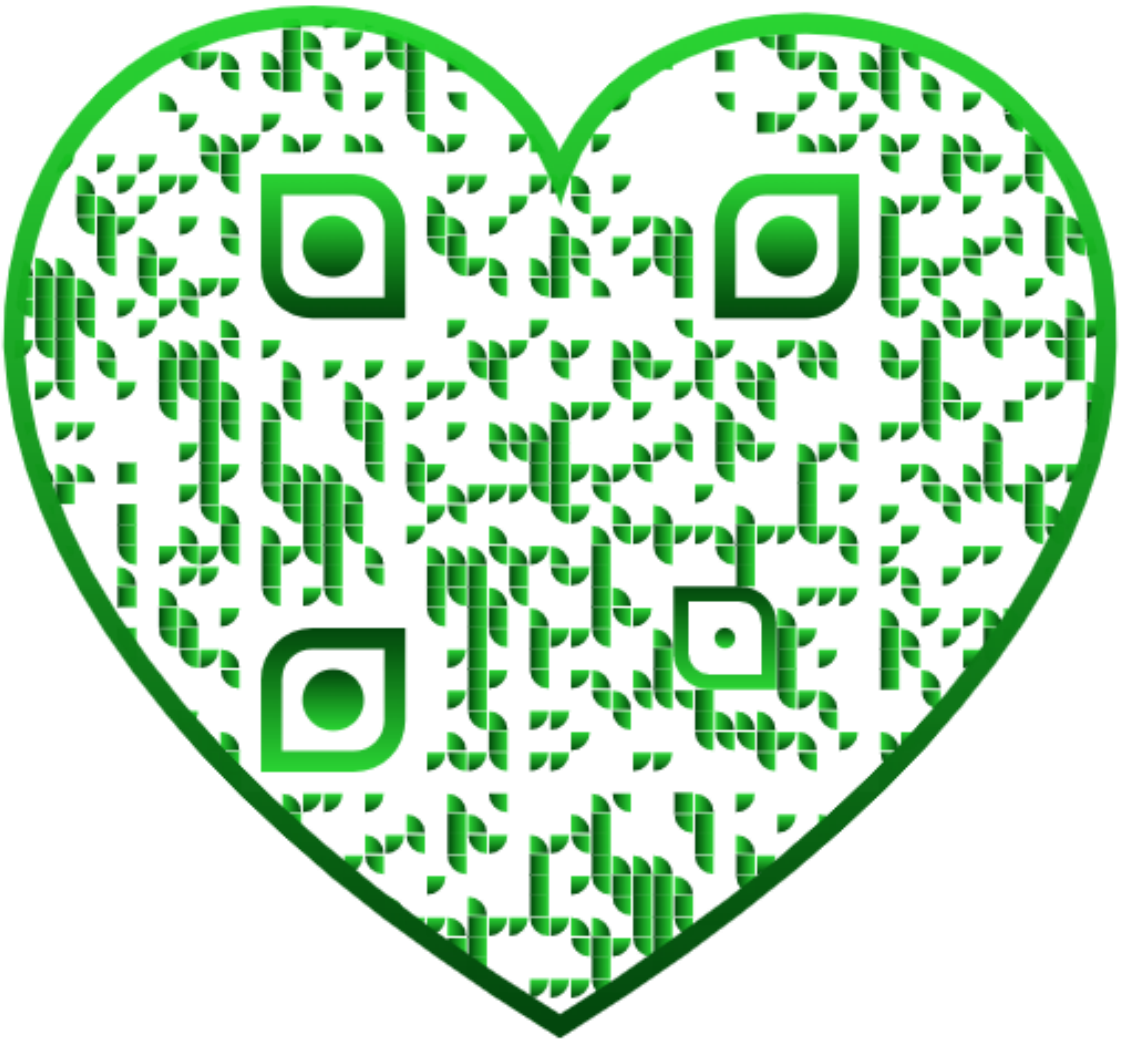
ALIEN MYSTERIES, CONSPIRACIES AND COVER-UPS



KEVIN D. RANDLE



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kevin D. Randle has studied the UFO phenomena in al its various

incarnations for more than forty years. Training with the U.S. Army as

a helicopter pilot, intel igence officer, and military policeman, and with the U.S. Air Force as both an intel igence officer and a public affairs officer, provided Randle with a keen insight into the operations and protocols of the military, their investigations into UFOs, and into a phenomenon that has puzzled people for more than a century. He retired from the army and the Iowa National Guard as a lieutenant colonel in 2009.

Randle’s educational background is as diverse as his military experience.

As an undergraduate at the University of Iowa, he studied anthropology.

Graduate work included journalism, psychology, and military science at the University of Iowa, California Coast University, and the American Military University. He has both a master’s degree and a doctorate in psychology, as wel as a second master’s degree in the art of military science.

During his investigations, Randle has traveled the United States to interview hundreds of witnesses who were involved in everything from the Roswel , New Mexico, crash of 1947 to the repeated radar

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sightings of UFOs over Washington, D.C., in 1952 to the latest of the abduction cases. He was among the rst writers to review the declassi ed Project Blue Book les, and

to report on animal mutilations, alien abductions and home invasions, and to suggest that humans are working with the aliens.

Randle has published many books about UFOs, including e UFO

Casebook, Crash: When UFOs Fal from the Sky, and Reflections of a UFO

Investigator. He hosts the blog www.KevinRandle.blogspot.com.

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(I certainly was.)

Just as importantly, during two sustained power outages, the library was a place where I could plug in the computer, watch DVDs, take notes, write, recharge my phone, and get warm. I can't imagine what I would have done

without the people and the place. ey have my most sincere thanks.

INTRODUCTION

The dictionary de nition of a conspiracy is two or more acting in concert with either an evil or criminal intent.

In the modern world, the idea of a conspiracy has expanded beyond the

traditional and legal de nitions. Today, it can mean the government acting to keep national secrets, to hide information that it would nd detrimental to the operations of various departments, or to keep the public in the dark about what some of those working for the

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government know. In other words, the government is involved with many conspiracies from who shot

President John Kennedy to the idea that no one ever landed on the moon.

To take this a step further, it might be said that some of those involved in UFO research are also involved in conspiracies to hide the truth. It might be a continued to support of the Majestic-Twelve, or the Al ende Letters, or any of the faked photographs that have been published as the real thing. It might be said that a conspiracy exists to push out information to convince others that alien creatures have visited Earth.

Or, it might be said that the government, along with debunkers, have conspired to keep the best information from the public. Was the Condon Committee, the “scienti c” study of UFOs at the University of Colorado in the late 1960s, a conspiracy to hide the truth about UFOs?

In other words, there are conspiracies al over the world regarding the

UFO phenomenon. Some are government-sanctioned, some are

government-sponsored, and more than a few can be laid at the feet of UFO

witnesses and UFO investigators. It is a world that is confusing, obscure, and hidden, overshadowing the serious research.

Now is the time to try to untangle some of this. We have access to information that had long been hidden. We have confessions by those who

were involved in some of those conspiracies. We have new science that helps

us untangle some of the knots that fooled us in the past. We have what we need to understand much of what has happened in the last

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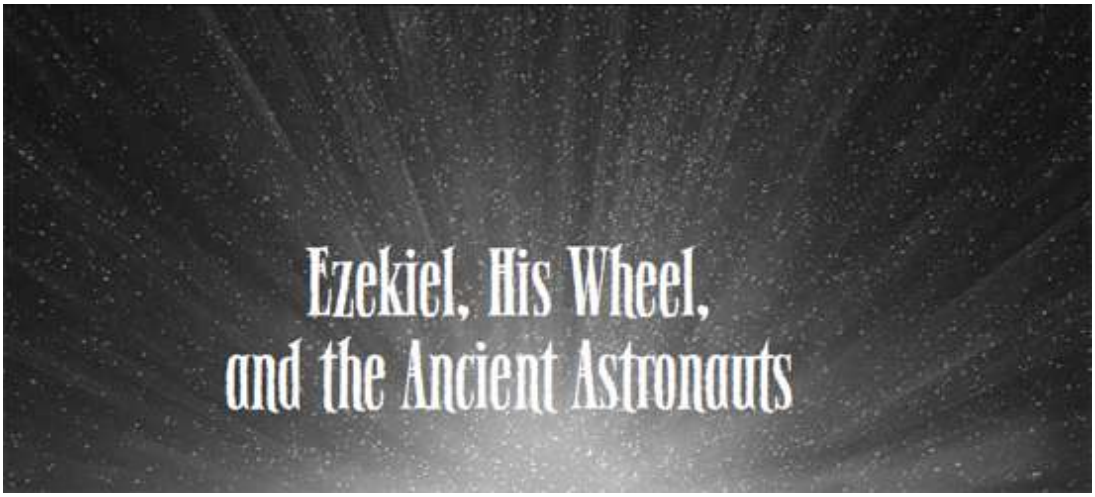
half century if we are smart enough to see it.

Here is the latest information, provided by many of those who were involved from the very beginning. Here are their words, tel ing us what they observed, what they did, and why they did it. Here, nal y, is an opportunity to remove some of the conspiracy notions from the world of the UFO, to

understand how other rumors began, and to sort it al out so that we can understand what happened.

Now, with inside sources, with new information, and with candid interviews, some of the theories of conspiracy can be eliminated… but in other cases, the conspiracy can be de ned so that we understand it a little better.

Here are some answers… and more than a few questions.



The current ufological thinking is that visitation by alien creatures didn’t begin in 1947 with the sightings in the United States and the crash outside of Roswel , New Mexico, or with the massive foo ghter sightings of the Second World War, or even as far back as the Great Airship sightings in 1897. Some believe that such visitation might have begun early in the history of human civilization, while others suggest such visitation began before there were even written records. Research of the records available, limited though they might be, and in drawings and artifacts le□ behind by those ancient people, hint that

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our human ancestors were seeing things in the sky that they could not identify and that they did not understand. □ey would invent some interesting explanations for these apparitions, including the idea that the creatures associated with the apparitions were gods that lived far above the Earth.

□at meant, simply, there were sightings, or rather, descriptions of events that suggest something unusual and possibly extraterrestrial was seen in the sky at the very dawn of human history. A look at ancient texts, hieroglyphics, and even cave paintings suggest there were sightings by the Egyptians, Romans, Greeks, Sumerians, Babylonians, and Chinese, and the peoples who preceded them. □ere is a rich history of UFO sightings in the ancient past, and it is only in the last □y years that such information has been recovered and understood.

Prehistoric UFO Sightings

□ere is a report, circulated for more than a half century now, that the remnants of an ancient and mysterious people had been found on the Chinese-Tibetian border in 1938. □e tale came from a Chinese scientist, Dr.

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Chi Pu Tei, when he found what are now cal ed the Dropa discs. He had led an expedition into an unexplored part of the Himalayan Mountains when he and his team stumbled into a series of interconnected caves. Examination by these scientists suggested that the caves had been arti cial y created as some kind of underground storage or burial complex in the distant past.

□is prehistoric wall painting in a cave in Val Camonica, Italy, seems to depict two people wearing space helmets.

□ey discovered neat rows of graves that contained smal skeletons with

big heads and fragile bodies, according to some of the available information.

Found in the area of the graves was a disc described as about nine inches in diameter, a half-inch thick with a hole in the center, making it look like an old-fashioned phonograph record. Archaeological dating techniques

suggested the disc was ten to twelve thousand years old.

Eventual y 716 such discs were uncovered. Each was etched with a groove, adding to the suggestion it was some kind of record. □ey were taken

back to Beijing University for study. Curiously, none of the skeletons were col ected at the time for further research and no photographs of them have ever been located.

□e discs, along with other nds from the expedition, were led away at

Beijing University for about twenty years. □ere, Dr. Tsum Um Nui, who began to examine them, discovered that the grooves were not just lines carved into the stone, but hieroglyphics that were so smal and so ne that he needed a magnifying glass to see them clearly. He claimed that he was able to decipher them a□er long study.

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According to his research, he learned that “□e Dropas came down from

the clouds in their aircra□. Our men, women, and children hid in the caves ten times before sunrise. When at last they understood the sign language of the Dropas, they realized that the newcomers had peaceful intentions.”

Another section of the nearly microscopic etchings suggested that the Dropas had “crash-landed” in a remote area that was inaccessible. Given that they were so isolated, they were unable to repair their cra□, or to build a new one. □ey could not return to their home world.

Tsum supposedly wrote a journal article about his research, but was denied permission to publish it, either by the university or by the journal editors. Another source, however, suggested that he did publish his article,

“□e Grooved Script concerning Spaceships which, as recorded on Discs, landed on Earth 12,000 years ago,” in 1962. His theories, however, were ridiculed by the established anthropological and archaeological communities.

He was cal ed a liar and worse by his col eagues and ed to Japan, where he died some time later.

□ere was further research on these discs conducted in the former Soviet

Union. According to Dr. Vyatcheslav Saizev, they scraped the discs, removing a layer of dirt and other debris, and then subjected them to chemical analysis.

He said that the discs seemed to vibrate or “hum” when an electrical current was introduced.

In 1974, an Austrian engineer, Ernst Wegerer, photographed two of the

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discs that were displayed in the Banpo Museum in Xian. He said that he

could see the hole in the center and could see some of the hieroglyphics on them, but his photographs didn’t show the writing.

He said that he held the discs, which were fairly light, weighing but a couple of pounds. His guide, or the manager of the museum as he cal ed her, didn’t know much about the discs. She said that they were some sort of cult objects. Wegerer reported that a couple of days a□er his visit, the manager was cal ed away and the discs had vanished from the museum displays.

Like so much else, these discs are stil wrapped in controversy. Skeptics say that the man who made the discovery, Chi Pu Tei, seems not to have existed, and that there is no reliable record of an expedition in 1938 to the area claimed. □ere is no Peking Academy of Prehistory.

□e real problem is that there are no known cases of someone translating

a new language without decades of work and some sort of major clue. □e

Egyptian hieroglyphics were only understood a□er nearly a century of study and the discovery of the Rosette Stone, which contained three versions of the same statement, two of which were known languages and the third being the hieroglyphics. Even with that, it stil took years of patient work to understand and decipher the hieroglyphics.

Other ancient writings have remained undeciphered because there was no connection to a modern language and no clues found in ancient texts. In other words, without some sort of hint, without someone or something to assist in the translation, there is no way for an unknown written language to be translated. It is not similar to the deciphering of a code, but a completely new written language.

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While it is claimed there are 716 discs, there are only pictures of two, and neither of them t the descriptions offered for the majority of them. When chased to its source, the information about the discs seems to vanish and that makes it difficult to substantiate the existence of the discs, or the translations that have supposedly come from them, or even the tale as handed down since the 1930s.

Indian Cave Paintings

UFO researcher Stanton Friedman has said that he and author-

researcher William Moore interviewed at least 130 individuals who have

firsthand knowledge of the UFO crash at Roswell.

Much more recently, the Rajasthan Times (though the newspaper is listed in various databases as Rajasthan Patrika), in February 2010, reported that anthropological groups working in a remote part of India had found prehistoric cave paintings that seemed to show both alien ships and the creatures from inside them.

□e newspaper reported, “Local archaeologist Mr. Wassim Khan has

personal y seen the images. He claims that the objects and creatures seen in them are total y anomalous and out of character when compared to other already discovered examples of prehistoric cave art depicting ancient life in the area. As such he believes that they might suggest beings from other planets have been interacting with humans since prehistoric times, adding weight to the ‘ancient astronaut theory’ which postulates that human civilization was established with the assistance of benevolent space-faring aliens.”

No fol ow-up stories have been found, and the Rajasthan Times is a newspaper printed in Hindi, which makes it difficult to verify the story. □e last paragraph seems to be too good to be true, since it quotes an anthropologist who claims that this discovery is “adding weight to the

‘ancient astronaut theory.’“

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Both these tales, the Dropa discs and the Indian cave paintings, seem to have a basis in fact, but fol ow-up information and corroboration have not been found. □at suggests, to the careful researcher, that these might be stories invented by others to further their own beliefs, their careers, or to thrust them into the international spotlight. Without more in the way of evidence, these are just stories that cannot be substantiated or trusted.

□e Ancient Historical Written Record

□e written record of UFO sightings in ancient times suffers from the same sort of trouble that plagues cave art, petroglyphs, and other stylized representations from prehistory. □at is, the interpretation of the symbols and the exact meaning is o□en open to question. What is one man's alien creature or extraterrestrial spacecra□ is another man's religious icon.

Descriptions of events are written in the language of those ancient times, which o□en makes them confusing if not misleading.

In about 100 B.C.E., Pliny wrote in his Natural History, Volume II, for example, about a "burning shield scattering sparks across the sky at sunset from east to west." While that suggests a disc-shaped object, it could also refer to a bright meteor that looked more or less disc-shaped.

Jacques Val ee, writing in Anatomy of a Phenomenon, reported that in 213

B.C.E., "In Hadria an 'altar' was seen in the sky, accompanied by the form of a man in white clothing. A total of a dozen such sightings between 222 and 90

B.C.E. can be listed…."

Brinsley Le Poer Trench wrote in the Flying Saucer Story that in 218 B.C.E.,

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“In Amiterno district many places were seen the appearance of men in white garments from far away. □e orb of the sun grew smal er. At Praeneste glowing lamps from heaven. At Arpi a shield in the sky. □e Moon contended with the sun and during the night two moons were seen. Phantom ships appeared in the sky.”

For a little more information, and maybe a slightly different

interpretation of the Trench work, there is Harold T. Wilkins’ Flying Saucers on the Attack. He wrote, “In B.C.E. 216: At Praeneste (65 Roman miles from Rome), burning lamps fel from the sky, and at Arpinium (42 Roman miles

east of Praeneste), a thing like a round shield [emphasis in the original] was seen in the sky.”

Wilkins also wrote that in 170 B.C.E., “At Lanupium (on the Appian Way

16 miles from Rome) a remarkable spectacle of a eet of ships seen in the air (classis magna species in coelo visae).”

What is interesting is that the information provided by Trench is just slightly different than that provided by Wilkins. It means one of three things and that is that both were working from primary sources and translated the Latin themselves, which could give the variations, or that Trench used Wilkins as the base and his reporting style was slightly different, meaning he rewrote the sentences to his taste, or that Wilkins wrote original y in English and Trench in French so there would be some slight variations in the way they related the material. It can also be suggested that these slight variations are of little real importance.

But translations can lead researchers astray. In the 1980s, a corporation that was opening trade with Russia conducted an experiment. □ey translated one of their technical papers into Russian and then had it translated back into English to nd out how wel the translations held up. □e most interesting example was that Hydraulic

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Rams came back as water lambs, not exactly the same thing. In fact, in the context of the paper (and about any context imaginable) it meant nothing. Just what is a water lamb anyway?

Such observations might not be important, except that later, the variations become important to those studying the ancient sightings. □ey provide some hints as to what has been going on in ancient times, at least as they relate to UFO sightings.

□ese sorts of sightings, of strange manifestations, continued on and moved around the European continent. Wilkins wrote that in 80 C.E., “When the Roman Emperor, Agricola, was in Scotland (Caledonia), wondrous ames were seen in the skies over Caledon wood, al one winter night.

Everywhere the air burned, and on many nights, when the weather was serene, a ship was seen in the air, moving fast.”

In 230 C.E., “Armies of footmen and horses were seen in the air over London and other places in England. □ey were ghting. □is was the time of the Roman emperor Alexander Severus.”

□ere were sightings that predate the few listed here. □e story of Ezekiel and his wheel predates them al and has been discussed in UFO circles almost from the beginning of the modern era.

Ezekiel Saw the Wheel

Nearly everyone has heard about Ezekiel and his wheel almost from the moment they rst learned about ying saucers and could understand the Bible. Being part of the Bible provides the sighting with an authenticity that many other ancient reports cannot claim, not to mention giving the story access to mil ions of people around the world. But the problem with lumping Ezekiel’s wheel in with modern UFO reports is that the tale, as it has been translated and retranslated and reinterpreted so many times by so many people, becomes difficult to know what is the truth about it and what is a translator’s interpretation. Many of those doing the translation had

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their own ideas and their own agendas, so modern UFO researchers might not have a

good idea about what Ezekiel saw, if he saw anything at al . □e modern interpretation, that Ezekiel had an encounter with extraterrestrials, here meaning creatures from another planet, isn't necessarily the correct one, or even the only such interpretation. □ose who believe other things have used the sighting to advance their causes as wel .

Ezekiel, according to nearly everything that has been written about him, was a Hebrew prophet who lived about twenty- ve hundred years ago. He was among several thousand captives taken from Jerusalem (in what is now Israel) to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar a□er he attacked the city. Ezekiel lived at Telabib on the Grand Canal that ran near Nippur from Babylon to Uruk in what is now modern-day Iraq.

It might be said that Ezekiel re-established his ministry in Babylon a□er his capture because his fel ow Israelites felt they were out of touch with Yahweh, who it was believed resided in the temple in Jerusalem. By tel ing his ock that Yahweh could be worshipped anywhere, he gave them hope and restored their faith while they were held captive in that foreign land; because of this, Ezekiel became their prophet.

It was while he was in Babylon that he reported his experience that was

eventual y recorded in the Bible. According to the King James version of the Bible, Ezekiel wrote:

(4) And I looked, and behold a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a re infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst

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thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the re.… (5) Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures … they had the likeness of man.… (6) And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.…

(13) □eir appearance was like burning coals of re and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures.… (15) Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces … the appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of beryl; and the four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work was as if it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.…

A depiction of the prophet Ezekiel’s sighting of a UFO.

UFO researchers, looking at these words in a modern world as people begin to break away from their religious heritage, have interpreted them in the context of the extraterrestrial, meaning, of course, coming from another planet. And if the creatures described

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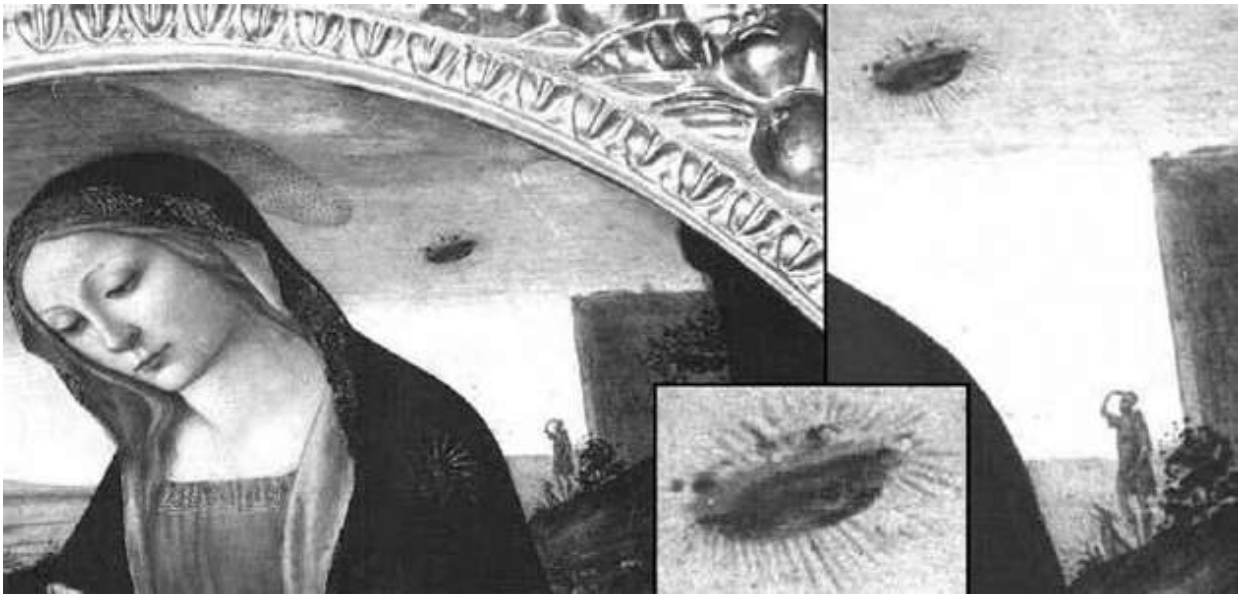
are of an extraterrestrial origin, then the wheel refers, of course, to their spacecra□, a ying saucer.

But al of this is ltered through modern eyes, putting a modern spin on it. If we look further and deeper, we begin to see things that do suggest the religious aspect to the report. Ezekiel, a religious man of the ancient world,



quite natural y saw this as a religious experience. □at is the spin he put on it, and we might want to consider what the witness himself thought about his experience rather than what we would like to believe about it now.

Examination of the text reveals some of the trouble might be found with

the interpretation or the translation of the ancient words made by so many others long a□er Ezekiel was gone and who are now long gone themselves. In the King James version of the Bible, the color of the wheel, for example, is said to be beryl, which, unfortunately, doesn't do much to de ne it.

According to the dictionary de nition, beryl is "a vitreous, green, light blue, yel ow, pink, or white silicate of aluminum."

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□is fi□eenth-century painting (believed to be by artist Domenico

Ghirlandaio), when inspected closely, appears to include a UFO flying in the background and observed by a man on a ledge. Sightings of UFOs in the past may have been interpreted as religious experiences by our ancestors.

In the standard revised version of the Bible as opposed to the King James version, it says, “(16) As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of a chrysolite; and the four had the same likeness, their construction being as a wheel within a wheel.”

Chrysolite is de ned as a variety of olivine. And that, in turn, is de ned as “a vitreous, orthorhombic, o□en transparent, olive-green, magnesium-iron silicate.”

So, in the various translations we have a variety of color for the wheels that does little to de ne it. It was either green, light blue, yel ow, pink, white, or olive green. Of course this problem is not that of Ezekiel but of those translating his original words, or a translation of a translation as it has come down through history, which is the whole point.

□ere are many other areas of con ict that can be discovered with very

little effort. For example, in the King James version, in chapter 13 it says that

“… their appearance was like burning coals of re and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures….”

In the standard revised version, it says, “In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of re, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures.”

An ancient Egyptian text, Annals of □utmose III, written about a thousand years before Ezekiel, told of □utmose’s wheel in the sky….

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Nothing there changes the actual meaning of the words. Each suggests something glowing, whether a lamp or coals, but they are not exactly the same thing. Al this demonstrates is that those making the translations have interpreted the words as best they could so that we see minor discrepancies.

In fact, it might be suggested that some of the translators changed the words to make them more understandable to the audience of those very translations. But al of this is trivial in nature and more playing with words than looking at the totality of the sighting.

□ere is another problem, and what some consider the major problem with Ezekiel's tale, and that is plagiarism. Ezekiel, according to many writers, was not the rst to make the claim of wheels in the sky, or that there were strange creatures associated with them. An ancient Egyptian text, Annals of

□utmose III, written about a thousand years before Ezekiel, told of

□utmose's wheel in the sky, containing a similar story using many of the same images and descriptions that were attributed to Ezekiel.

Published reports now suggest that Prince Boris de Rachewiltz said that

al this, Ezekiel's wheel, came from a translation of a papyrus that was among

the papers of Professor Alberto Tul i, formerly the director of the Egyptian Vatican Museum. Somehow, a□er Tul i's death, his papers and the original papyrus were scattered among his living relatives and eventual y lost.

However, the translation remained and according to it:

In the year 22, third month of winter, sixth hour of the day…. □e scribes of the House of Life found it was a circle of re that was coming in the sky … it had no head, the breath of its mouth … a foul odour. Its body was 1 rod long and 1 rod large. It had no voice…. □ey

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went to the King … to report it. His Majesty ordered … as to al which is written in the House of Life of His Majesty was meditating upon what happen. Now, a□er some days had passed over those things, Lo! □ey were more numerous than anything. □ey were shining in the sky more than the sun to the limits of the four supports of heaven…. Powerful position of the re circles…. □e army of the king looked on and His Majesty was in the midst of it…. □ereupon [the re circles] went up higher…. Fishes and volatiles fel down from the sky….

But what is one of these ancient stories of alien contact without additional controversy? □e Condon Committee, the scienti c study of UFOs conducted at the University of Colorado in the late 1960s (and examined in depth later) and paid for by the Air Force, was led by American physicist Edward Uhler Condon (1902–1974), who helped develop radar and was a pioneer of quantum mechanics. His committee investigated the papyrus story because of its association with Ezekiel, his association with UFOs, and an al eged connection to the Vatican and de Rachewiltz. Samuel Rosenberg wrote in the Condon Committee's nal report, Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects, that de Rachewiltz was an amateur Egyptologist and that the papyrus, if it had ever existed, was now missing, which he thought suspicious. Without the original papyrus, they were unable to ascertain the validity of the story or even the existence of the original document.

In the end it makes little difference if de Rachewiltz was an amateur Egyptologist or not. Many amateurs provide useful service in various scienti c elds. Amateur astronomers, for example, provide a huge network of eyes trained in astronomy to perform tasks that the professionals would rather not do because they can become tedious. Sometimes these amateurs, because of their love for the topic, are simply better at it than the professionals who are obligated to produce results and publish their ndings on a regular basis. While they choose the profession original y for its appeal

to them, they o□en have lost their love of it while the amateurs work in the eld because they love doing it. It's not unlike the Little League basebal player who struggles to play while the major leaguer seems

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to be more interested in his salary, his product endorsements, and looking good on the sports shows than he is in playing the game.

Other researchers, such as Jacques Bergier in his book, Extraterrestrial Intervention: □e Evidence, fol owed the path created by the Condon Committee and Rosenberg and obtained different results which, again, is no real surprise. He found no evidence that the Tul i papyrus was a fraud or a hoax, which is not to say that it isn't. He was merely suggesting that the case wasn't quite as cut and dried as Rosenberg had claimed it to be when he nished his research for the Condon Committee and the Air Force. Bergier

thought the question of the translation and the papyrus validity was stil open. I'm not sure that the question matters at this point unless you're a biblical scholar. For the UFO researcher, the source of this story, because of its age and its ambiguities, is irrelevant.

In the end, whether researchers accept the more ancient story written on Egyptian papyrus or that of Ezekiel written some time later, the case is stil a single witness sighting that the witness himself suggested was of a religious nature and termed it in the words of a religious experience. It could be nothing more than a hal ucination, it could be a confabulation, it could be the accurate description of a religious experience, or it could be some sort of interaction with alien creatures from another world. Given the passage of time and the somewhat vague and even contradictory nature of the descriptions, there isn't much that can be said about Ezekiel and his wheel other than it could have come from a more ancient story and that it could refer to alien visitation—even if Ezekiel had plagiarized it.

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More Ancient Sightings

□en, a couple of thousand years later there are other sightings that are of interest to researchers. In 577 C.E., for example, an object described as a lance crossed the sky. And four hundred years a□er that, in 919, a aming torch was seen, and two hundred years later, in 1168, a globe of re was seen moving “to and fro.”

A wood print by Samuel Coccius depicts a scene in Basle, Switzerland, in which witnesses said they saw numerous globes apparently fighting each other at fast speeds.

□ese are just a few of the examples of ancient UFO reports that dot the

literature. Each of these sightings could be explained by meteors. While a burning shield suggests something other than a meteor, it could also refer to a bolide, a large, bright meteor that could easily be

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cal ed a burning shield and would be easily visible in the daylight. Flaming torches and a globe of re certainly could be meteors or other natural phenomena that the ancient

observer didn't understand. Each would suggest something spectacular simply because meteors were surely seen frequently and while not understood for what they were, would be considered a natural event. If the meteor was large enough or bright enough, then special note might have been made of it by the observer.

Meteors do not explain a sighting made on March 3, 1557, when, according to the old sources, a "thunderbolt pierced the bridal chamber of Francois Montmorency and Diane de France, running into every corner of

the tent before it exploded harmlessly." □at sounds suspiciously like bal lightning, a natural phenomenon that has only recently been accepted by modern science and something that would have easily startled someone living in the sixteenth century.

Jacques Val ee wrote, in Anatomy of a Phenomenon, that Edmund Hal ey,

in 1716, saw a bright object that stayed in the sky for two hours. He said that it was so bright that he could read a printed text. Clearly this was not some kind of meteor or comet, which Hal ey understood. It was not bal lightning either. It was something else. Something strange enough that Hal ey made note of it.

Alien Beings in Ancient Times

And there are descriptions, or rather tales, of beings from these cra□. W.R.

Drake, in his Spacemen in the Middle Ages, reported, "Agobard, Archbishop of Lyons, wrote in De Grandine et Tonitrua how, in 840 C.E., he found the mob in Lyons lynching three men and a woman accused of landing from a cloudship from the aerial region of Magonia. □e Archbishop halted the execution and freed the victims."

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Brad Steiger, in his book □e Fel owship, also claimed contact between aliens and humans was made in 840 C.E. using the same account of the Archbishop as his source. He suggested that the French referred to the aliens as sky people because they descended from the upper reaches of the atmosphere in spacecra□. □e locals cal ed the spacecra□ “ships from the clouds.”

□e description of the aliens offered by Steiger was of creatures with large heads, pointed ears, and bulging eyes, which isn’t al that different from some of the descriptions of the gray aliens said to be responsible for modern abductions. Steiger also wrote, as have others, that these aliens told the French that their home was a place cal ed Magonia. □ese creatures interacted with the local peasants and tradesmen, making them sound more like sailors or merchants than alien creatures from some kind of a spacecra□.

For some reason, according to Steiger, a dispute erupted between the French and the four aliens, who were then seized and bound with chains.

Steiger said that a□er being held for several days in jail, the prisoners were paraded before a mob, which suddenly went berserk and stoned them to death.

□e Archbishop, according to stil another variation of the story, which

was offered in stil another UFO book, was an eyewitness to the alien’s execution. □is al was revealed by Hayden Hewes, a fel ow from Oklahoma

who, with Steiger, coauthored the UFO Missionaries Extraordinary, which was published in 1976. Yes, the same Brad Steiger who had a slightly different interpretation in a different book. □is, of course, is in con ict with stil other accounts, including that of Val ee, who said that the mob was attempting to lynch the men and woman but apparently were stopped by the Archbishop.

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Text, written original y in Latin and available in various libraries today, actual y reads (as translated into English):

We have seen and heard many men plunged in such great stupidity, sunk in such depths of fol y, as to believe that there is a certain region, which they cal Magonia, whence ships sail in the clouds, in order to carry back to that region those fruits of the earth which are destroyed by hail and tempests; sailors paying rewards to the storm wizards, and themselves receiving corn and other produce.

Out of the number of those whose blind fol y was deep enough to al ow them to believe these things possible, I saw several exhibitions in a certain concourse of people, four persons in bonds—three men and a woman who said they had fal en from these same ships; a□er keeping them for some days in captivity they had brought them before the assembled multitude, as we have said in our presence, to be stoned. But truth prevailed.

Brad Steiger

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So, now it is a tale of four people who came from ships that travel in the clouds, as opposed to “cloudships” and who, according to the original text, were about to be stoned. □e Archbishop, apparently, was able to stop the execution with the truth. □ere is no description in the original that matches

modern-day aliens, and only a reference to a ship that sails in clouds suggests the reason for making this some sort of UFO report. □e description could refer to many things, and none of them require an alien spacecra□.

Somewhat less controversial is the story of demon ships in the skies above Ireland, which here means that there aren’t many different interpretations of the sighting. According to the information contained in Flying Saucers on the Attack:

□ere happened in the borough of Cloera, one Sunday, while the people were at Mass, a marvel…. It befel that an anchor was dropped from the sky with a rope attached to it and one of the ukes caught in the arch above the church door.

□e people rushed out of the church and saw in the sky a ship with men on board, oating before the anchor-cable, and they saw a man leap overboard …

as to release it….

Each of these sightings, including reports of beings or creatures from them, could not only refer to a classical UFO, but it could also mean sightings of natural phenomena or terrestrial-built cra□ crewed by humans rather than alien creatures. □ere is simply not enough information for us to draw any kind of speci c conclusion or to suggest this is a ying saucer sighting and actual y, no reason to believe it so. It is a matter of interpretation.

On March 17, 1458, five stars appeared, circling the moon. □ey changed color three times and vanished suddenly.

Ancient Sightings Continue

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□ere are other writings in which the object is not something vague that could easily be a misidenti ed natural phenomenon, but in which the descriptions are very interesting and detailed enough for us to eliminate the mundane. Most of these cases come from the nineteenth century and most

are here in the United States, but a few are from the more distant past and from a variety of foreign lands.

On August 12, 1133, in Japan, it was reported that a large, silvery disc approached the ground. In 1361, a ying object described as being “shaped like a drum, about twenty feet in diameter” emerged from the Inland Sea off western Japan. On January 2, 1458, a bright object resembling the ful moon was seen in the sky, and its apparition was fol owed by “curious signs” in heaven and earth. On March 17, 1458, ve stars appeared, circling the moon.

□ey changed color three times and vanished suddenly. Japanese rulers were horri ed and believed that the sign announced the coming of a great disturbance. □e people in Kyoto were expecting disasters to fol ow, and the emperor himself was very upset.

Researchers believe that the sightings are real because they have been recorded in ancient works, or rather, they have been told they were. But then there is the tale of “Brother John’s Saucer,” which was spotted in 1250 C.E., or 1290 according to Jacques Val ee in his Anatomy of a Phenomenon. No matter what the exact date, it is a report that is more than 750 years old and ts into the pattern of ancient sightings in ancient texts.

According to the documents:

As the brothers assembled for their evening meal, they heard a noise in the doorway. Brother John stood in the doorway with a terrorstricken look on his face.

“What happened, Brother John,” inquired the abbot.

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“I was walking towards the abbey from the elds and thinking about the roast mutton dinner. A strange noise overhead scared me. I looked up in the sky. A large silver plate is up there in the sky.”

□e monks forgot their dinners and dashed into the yard…. Henry the Abbot and Brother John stepped from the dining room. A giant ying disc hovered in

the sky and dri□ed slowly in the clouds….

□ere is, of course, the expected controversy about the sighting. □is is, a□er al , a report of a disc in the sky, hovering over a church, observed by the brothers of the abbey. UFO researchers as distinguished as Jacques Val ee and Brinsley Le Poer Trench, as sloppy as Frank Edwards and Morris K. Jessup, and as radical as George Adamski and Desmond Leslie have reported on the sighting. But, as is the case in so much of UFO research, they failed to go to the original sources, o□en because access to those sources is strictly limited.

Rosenberg, of the Condon Committee who worried about Ezekiel, checked

to see if the abbey existed, learned that it did, and cabled (for those of the younger generation, think emailed) John Haggerty to check on the validity of the document and to investigate the story in the original sources. □e reply from Haggerty was that the document was a hoax created by two students in a letter to the London Times. □is just shows that something that is suggested to be ancient and that has been printed in the newspaper isn’t necessarily the truth.

Final y, the Flying Saucers

It wasn’t until the nineteenth century that descriptions became detailed enough for investigators to understand them completely and rule out many natural phenomena. □e language used is, of course, our language, and the people had a better understanding of meteors, comets, and even weather phenomena that stil inspires some UFO

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reports today. But as researchers move into an arena where there are lots of records and lots of witness statements, they are able to remove many natural phenomena from listings.

At least the records are there for those who wish to see them, and sometimes that is the only way to understand what has been happening.

John Martin, who lived near Dennison, Texas, reported that on January

22, 1878, he saw an orange object high in the morning sky. It approached him, and when it was nearly overhead, he said that it appeared to be about the size of a large saucer.

□e Dennison Daily News reported on January 25, 1878:

Mr. John Martin, a farmer who lives some six miles south of this city, we learn the fol owing strange story: Tuesday morning while out hunting, his attention was directed to a dark object high up in the northern sky. □e peculiar shape and velocity with which the object seemed to approach riveted his attention and he strained his eyes to discover its character. When rst noticed, it appeared to be about the size of an orange, which continued to grow in size.

A□er gazing at it for some time Mr. Martin became blind from long looking and le□ off viewing it for a time in order to rest his eyes. On resuming his view, the object was almost overhead and had increased considerably in size, and appeared to be going through space at wonderful speed.

When directly over him it was about the size of a large saucer and was evidently at great height. Mr. Martin thought it resembled, as wel as he could judge, a bal oon. It went as rapidly as it had come and was soon lost to sight in the heavenly skies. Mr. Martin is a gentleman of undoubted veracity and this strange occurrence, if it was not a bal oon, deserves the attention of our scientists.

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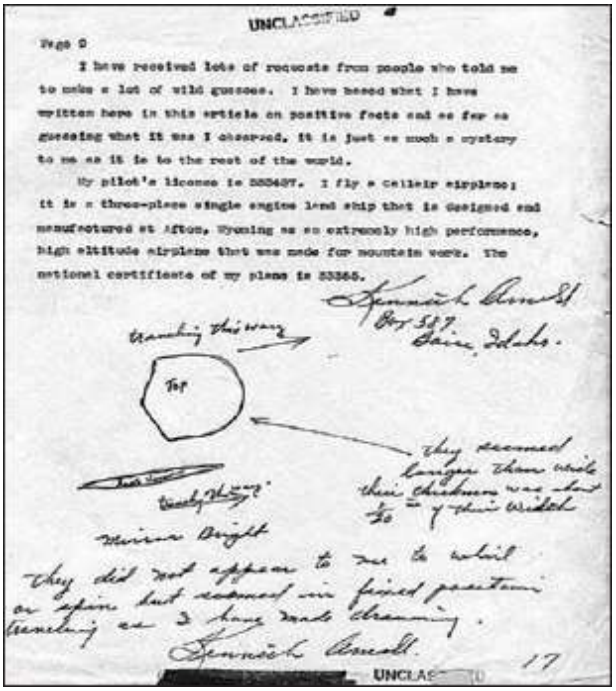
He wasn’t real y talking about its motion as that of a saucer, or that it was even saucer shaped, but that it was the size of a saucer in the sky, but he did say saucer in relation to the sighting. Some seventy years later, a newsman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I have received lots of requests from people who told me to make a lot of wild guesses. I have based what I have written here in this article on positive facts and as far as guessing what it was I observed, it is just as much a mystery to me as it is to the rest of the world.

My pilot's license is 555627. I fly a Callair airplane; it is a three-place single engine land ship that is designed and manufactured at Afton, Wyoming as an extremely high performance, high altitude airplane that was made for mountain work. The national certificate of my plane is 33365.

Kenneth Arnold
Box 587
Boise, Idaho.

traveling this way

Top

they seemed longer than wide their thickness was about 1/20 of their width

Maurice Wright

They did not appear to me to whirl or spin but seemed in fixed position traveling as a long wide streaming.

Kenneth Arnold

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would report the words of Kenneth Arnold about the motion of the objects he saw, and the world would be introduced to ying saucers. Arnold’s report then was no more descriptive of the object than Martin’s words—but when

have things like that ever gotten in the way of a good story.

□e letter Kenneth Arnold wrote to Army Air Force Intelligence on July 12, 1947, describing a UFO.

On May 15, 1879, sailors on the Vultur, sailing in the Persian Gulf, saw two large, glowing wheels that were slowly descending and spinning. □ey were about 120 feet in diameter and separated by nearly 500 feet. □ese were more like ying saucers than most of what we have read about in so many of those ancient accounts.

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□e ship's crew talked of wheels, just as did Ezekiel so many centuries earlier. So maybe there is a connection with UFOs and the past. Maybe we're just looking too hard but the problem is that we don't have any physical evidence. We are le□ with written records that have been misinterpreted by writers who wish for ancient con rmation of our modern sightings, or writers who borrowed from one another, assuming that the rst had checked the source but did no checking him- or herself. Myths, exaggerations, half-truths, and hoaxes are perpetuated by one writer a□er another simply because he or she didn't attempt to nd the original sources. In the end, we

are le□ with some interesting tales but no real con rmation of them and no evidence that UFOs as we know them today have been sighted for centuries.

□ere is, however, an area where there are claims of physical evidence.

□ese are the "Out of Place Artifacts," and they just might give us the physical evidence of those ancient UFOs for which we search. If nothing else, they are an interesting side issue to our human history.

There is a form of evidence for UFOs that goes beyond the sightings

recorded by our ancestors and that suggests that we might not have been alone during our long climb from nomadic creatures who could barely be classi ed as human to our modern civilizations. □is physical

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evidence is available for study and could supply some clues about the validity of an interpretation of those ancient writings and UFO reports. It can always be said that the ancient writers were unfamiliar with the natural world around them and jumped to conclusions based on their ignorance. A glowing shield or a aming spear giving off sparks can just as easily be a meteor as it can an alien spacecra□. It al depends on the interpretation and the knowledge of the natural world by those making the observations.

Physical artifacts seem to support the idea of ancient technological civilization or alien visitation and can validate the importance of those earlier writings. Ancient artifacts are a form of corroboration that can be seen, felt, and tested in today's world. It is physical evidence that provides proof without interpretation.

□ese ancient artifacts, such as iron nails found in solid rock, a delicate gold chain found in a lump of coal in the 1890s, or an ornate bel -shaped vessel inlaid with silver blasted from solid rock in a Massachusetts quarry in 1852, are cal ed "Out of Place Artifacts," known popularly as OOPARTs.

□ey seem to suggest that someone had been manufacturing objects mil ions of years before the human race was capable of such ne and precise work or even before humans in any form existed on this planet. □ese

artifacts are, in essence, a form of proof that another intel igence had once walked the Earth, maybe before the dinosaurs disappeared, and that those sophisticated beings probably originated in outer space, given the fossil and geological records relied on by our modern-day scientists. It is circumstantial evidence that, if accurate and properly dated, provides us with the proof that some ancient UFO sightings were of alien spacecra□.

□ese OOPARTs, or Out of Place □ings (OOPTHs; the origin of both

terms seem to belong to Ivan T. Sanderson), break nicely into two categories.

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First are the gold chains found inside rock, suggesting manufacture mil ions of years ago. □e second group is those inventions or creations that seem too advanced for the society that produced them, such as electric batteries made in Babylon thousands of years before anyone had a need for electricity or any kind of storage cel , and a working, gear-driven model of the solar system made by the ancient Greeks and found just over a century ago. □is model is, in essence, a type of mechanical, astronomical computer used to predict the movement of the then-known planets, the sun, and the moon.

OOPTHs

One of the rst of that former group was referenced in several UFO books (and some of the creationist materials) and refers to some sort of “bel -

shaped vessel” discovered during blasting in a quarry in Massachusetts in the mid-nineteenth century. According to those writers and researchers, the object, based on the geological formation from which it came, is somewhere around half a bil ion years old. Other sources suggested it was a mere one hundred thousand years old. Either way, it is something that shouldn’t have existed at the time it was made or in the rock strata in which it was found.

According to some of those UFO books, the original source for this story was the Scientific American in 1851, a periodical that was a little less scienti cal y oriented then than it is today. □e story was headlined “A relic of a by-gone age,” although some suggested it was labeled simply as “A Curiosity.”

□e story, as reported in those UFO books, was that the blasting in the

quarry “threw an immense mass of rock … in al directions.” Among the shattered debris, the workmen found a smal metal ic vessel in two pieces that when reassembled formed a “bel shape” about four and a quarter inches high and about six inches wide at the top. □e whole thing was something like an eighth of an inch thick and it was clearly

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something that required a knowledge of metal-working because of the ne detail on it.

e report continued, saying that it was made of zinc with “a

considerable portion of silver.” e sides were inlaid with silver, and the carving was “exquisitely done by the art of some cunning workman.” e magazine concluded, again according to al those UFO books, that the nd was worthy of additional investigation because the vessel was extremely old, predating the rst inhabitants of the continent, including al of the native tribes.

e University of Iowa library, in its bound periodical section, holds the entire run of Scientific American. It would be easy enough to check the primary source of the story. So I did. To my disappointment, but not great surprise, there was nothing in the 1851 issues about anything like the metal

vessel being found. True, there were a number of things labeled as

“curiosities,” but nothing that told of manufactured items coming out of solid rock from a quarry.

But research isn’t always that simple, and there is always the chance that someone had written down a date wrong and it was then copied by al those others who failed to do primary research but who believed the others had checked. So, I decided to look in both 1850 and 1852, and being somewhat compulsive about such things, I quite natural y started in 1850 because it came before 1852.

According to … writers and researchers, the object, based on the geological formation from which it came, is somewhere around half a

billion years old.

e article appeared in the June 5, 1852 edition of the Scientific American, on page 298. e details as listed in most of the UFO books were substantial y correct, though they do leave out some important and interesting information.

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□at Scientific American article said, “On the sides there are six gures of a ower or bouquet, beautiful y inlaid with pure silver, and around the lower part of the vessel a vine, or wreath, inlaid also with silver. □e chasing, carving, and inlaying are exquisitely done by the art of some cunning workman.”

□e entry continues, noting, “□ere is no doubt that this curiosity was

blown out of the rock … but wil … some other scienti c man please tel us how it came there?”

While I had been at the mercy of those other writers in the past, until I began to roam the stacks in the bound periodicals section of the University of Iowa library, researchers today aren’t so restricted (and I wouldn’t be surprised to learn that some of them have never seen the inside of a library, let alone bound periodicals). I typed “Scientific American 1852” into a search engine and in seconds was looking at a complete listing for Scientific American available online. Since I already knew the date, I could easily pul

up what I wanted. Anyone with access to a computer and an online service could do the same (and therefore stay out of the library).

Tubal Cain

Like so much else in the UFO eld, there is always something le□ out of the stories in al those UFO books. What is rarely mentioned is a paragraph at the end of the article in which it is suggested that Tuba Cain, one of the rst residents of the area (from seventeenth century America), had made the vessel.

But sometimes UFO research takes off on strange tangents. On closer examination of the Scientific American, it begins to look as if the mark at the end of the sentence that I thought original y was an artifact caused by the micro lm process, and right a□er the word Tuba, is an “L” that slipped out of alignment and into the margin. □is means the name is a reference to Tubal Cain, and Tubal Cain probably wasn’t a reference to one of the rst residents of Dorchester

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County, Massachusetts, but was a descendant of Adam and Eve. Tubal Cain refers to blacksmiths from antiquity, and the original Tubal Cain supposedly worked with bronze and iron in the far distant past and nowhere near the New World. In fact, according to the Bible (Genesis 4:22),

“Zil ah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged al kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain’s sister was Naaman.”

In the end, we’re le with many unanswered questions, including that

of the placement of the vessel….

Here is something else from outside the UFO eld: Tubal Cain is a secret Masonic phrase, something that certainly wasn’t wel known in 1852. So now the question becomes: Is this tale of a metal ic vessel found in solid rock true, or does it have some signi cance to the Masons and the use of Tubal Cain is the clue? I confess that I don’t know. I am more than a little disturbed to learn of the history of Tubal Cain and the reference to it, or him, in this particular article. ere is no reason for those other writers to have made anything out of the reference, unless they themselves were Masons and knew the code. Without an Internet connection and search engines, I certainly would not have made the connection, nor would I have known to ask the question.

Ignoring that little bit of diversion, we nd that if we are going to look at the rest of the case with a scienti c detachment, we must ask a couple of other questions. First, did they nd anything to suggest the vessel had been embedded in the rock? Did they nd bits of rock that matched the contours of the vessel? If we were to date the “vessel” according to standard archaeological methodology, would we be forced to conclude that the vessel was mil ions of years old because that was the age of the material in which it was found?

Second, they suggest that a scienti c man should take a look at the vessel and name Professor Agassiz as someone to study the nd. e Scientific American wondered what Agassiz’s credentials were to

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make any sort of study. I confess that in today's world, I'm a little curious about the man's credentials as wel , though there is nothing to suggest that he ever looked at the vessel or rendered an opinion about its authenticity, so this is real y a dead issue.

But, of course, it is possible to learn who, exactly, Agassiz is, with the same Internet that provided the information on Tubal Cain. He was a Swiss-born paleontologist, glaciologist, and geologist who studied the Earth's natural history. He was a professor at Harvard, and in 1852 he accepted a medical professorship of comparative anatomy in Charleston,

Massachusetts, which suggests that if he had examined the vessel, he would have been able to render a professional assessment of it. □ere is no indication that he ever looked at it, or that he was even aware of its existence.

In the end, we're le□ with many unanswered questions, including that of

the placement of the vessel and if it was actual y embedded in the stone as original y suggested. It is always possible that it was not embedded in the stone but was associated with it. □at means, simply, that the vessel was hidden in the dirt on top of the stone, maybe lost in it, but had not been embedded in the stone.

Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews and James Doeser, two professional

archaeologists who run the Bad Archaeology website, wrote this about the vessel: "… it is difficult to understand why anyone might take this report seriously." □ey suggest that the object is a candlestick in the Victorian style.

□ey don't understand why anyone in 1852 would think the object was more than a few years old.

And we al now wonder if there was a hidden meaning in this article that was meant for the Masons because of the use of Tubal Cain. Does that mean the story is untrue and placed there for some now

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forgotten reason, or is the rest of the article accurate? In a world l ed with speculations about a da Vinci code, Templars, and a bloodline related to Christ, it is not difficult to believe that the Masons of the nineteenth century planted the article for some probably trivial, but certainly unknown, reason.

More OOPTHS

□ere are, however, other incidents, not unlike this report, but where the manufactured objects were taken out of what looked to be solid rock or coal.

In an account given before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Sir David Brewster said that a nail had been found embedded in solid rock. About an inch of the nail was protruding and the rest was lying along the stone and projecting into a layer of ground, where it had rusted.

□e report suggested that the nail was partial y in the stone but had not been driven into it. In other words, the nail was part of the sedimentary material that had congealed into granite so that it was part of the rock. □at would mean that the nail had been manufactured mil ions of years earlier, if al aspects of the report were true and the observations about it accurate.

Similarly, there is a story about a rock hammer that was found embedded in rock in June, 1934 near London, Texas. According to the story, members of the Hahn family found a bit of wood that seemed to be protruding from the rock. When they broke it open, they found the hammer head and just a bit of the handle.

□e whole area, on the Red Creek, is part of the Edwards Plateau, which

is made up of Cretaceous rock. Upstream there is an area with many fossils of dinosaurs, which according to one dating method means the hammer is

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about 140 mil ion years old. Analysis of the hammer suggests that it is made out of a strange iron mix with chlorine as some kind of an additive. □at is not a common mixture today.

Many more such objects seem to have been found in coal. Brad Steiger,

in Mysteries of Time & Space, reported that Wilbert H. Rusch, Sr., Professor of Biology, Concordia Col ege, Ann Arbor, Michigan, quoted a letter a friend had received from Frank J. Kenwood, who said that he had been a

reman at the Municipal Electric Plant in □omas, Oklahoma, in 1912 when

he split a large piece of coal and found an iron pot encased inside.

Quoting from the letter, Steiger wrote, "□is iron pot fel from the center leaving the impression or mold of the pot in this piece of coal. I traced the

source of the coal and found that it came from the Wilburton, Oklahoma, mines."

Others have made similar discoveries in lumps of coal. Mrs. S. W. Culp,

according to the Morrisonvil e, Il inois Times, published on June 11, 1891, found an artifact when she broke a lump of coal as she was preparing to toss it in a stove. According to the story, "Mrs. Culp thought the chain had been dropped accidental y in the coal, but as she undertook to li□ the chain up, the idea of its having been recently dropped was at once fal acious, for as the lump of coal broke, the middle of the chain became loosened while each end remained fastened to the coal."

□e coal was identi ed as coming from mines in southern Il inois.

Steiger suggests that the coal is from the Carboniferous era.

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□e hard stone had surrounded the screw so that its contours had been

preserved but the metal itself was gone.

In 1869, miners working the Abbey Mine near Treasure City, Nevada, claimed they had found a screw, or rather the remnants of a screw, embedded in a piece of feldspar. □ey could see the screw's taper and the way the threads had lined up. □e hard stone had surrounded the screw so

that its contours had been preserved but the metal itself was gone.

I queried the Smithsonian about this and several other like reports a number of years ago. □ey suggested, "… manufactured items … would not

normal y be found in rocks or coal since the latter were formed before the advent of man. □e only such inclusion [meaning here that it has become

mixed in with other debris] would be if the rock material had been broken and the artifacts had gotten lost among it, and then moss had recemented it by sedimentary action."

□is is certainly a convenient explanation and is, of course, quite possible. It is also possible, as in the case of the metal vessel from Dorchester, that it had not been embedded in the rock, but was associated with material around the rock. □at means, simply, that it could have been something buried in so□er ground that was uprooted by the explosion and

fel in among the debris of the quarry where it was found, giving the impression that it was blown out of solid rock.

Some support for that conclusion comes from the study of the history of

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OOPARTs. Info Journal (No. 59) reported that around 1900 an Englishman

found a coin embedded in a lump of coal. □e coin was clearly dated 1397.

So, we have an artifact that was found in coal that was clearly dated long a□er the coal was formed, unless we are wil ing to believe that some ancient, unknown, or alien civilization used a numbering system just like ours. We have seen, since the beginning of written history, a variety of numbering systems, so why believe the ancients would use the same system we do today? Why wouldn't they have invented their own?

□ere is further information that sheds additional light on this, and we

don't need philosophic discussions of numbering systems to understand it.

A□er Mount St. Helens blew up a group of scientists discovered that peat deposits had developed in an unexpectedly short time at the bottom of a lake. It suggested that some coal beds could theoretical y form in far less time than conventional y believed.

What al this tel s us is that there are some interesting enigmas out there and that there seem to be some rational explanations for some of these strange nds. But, and this is critical, those explanations rely partly on speculation. Further study is required on this before we can either accept the data as proved or reject it as awed.

Out of Place Inventions

But now we move into the arena of inventions that seem out of place for the time in which they were created. Books and magazines are l ed with examples of inventions that seem to be ahead of their time, and they have used these inventions to postulate alien intervention in human history.

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Some writers, however, suggest these super inventions, such as the steam engine created by the ancient Egyptian Hero, are little more than curiosities that had no practical use in their worlds, at least none that were obvious to others. Some, however, created out of the cultural elements of the time, are certainly the things of speculation and conjecture.

Many of those books and magazines o□en refer to batteries that were made in ancient Babylon some two or three thousand years ago. □ey were

discovered by German archaeologist Wilhelm König working near Baghdad

in 1938.

□ese were a number of smal clay jars with necks covered in asphalt and

containing iron rods encased in copper. König thought, based on his observations, that these were some form of storage battery. When l ed with an electrolyte (like citrus fruit juice), each of the jars could generate an electrical current, though the liquid for the electrolyte had long ago escaped from the jars he found.

König came to this conclusion because a number of very ne silver objects had been discovered in Iraq that had been plated with a thin layer of gold. Electroplating requires electricity, and the batteries would provide the current to do it. Mythbusters, which airs on □e Discovery Channel, showed that similar batteries, when hooked up in series, could produce a current of sufficient strength to electroplate objects. It might take a while, but it could be done.

Of course, the fact that similar batteries constructed today have that capability doesn’t mean that the ancient batteries were used for that purpose.

Others, such as Dr. Arne Eggebrecht, showed that the Babylon Batteries weren’t very effective at electroplating. Besides, it’s now

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believed that the

objects that König thought had been electroplated might have been re-guilded instead.

□en, other information found by other archaeologists suggests the batteries might be only □een hundred years old, not two to three thousand years. Not that a change in the date from two thousand to □een hundred

matters al that much. □e questions that remain—since the jars obviously exist and were, until recently, on display in Baghdad—are who made them

and why would they do that?

It is clear, however, that the elements used to construct these batteries, meaning the material for the jars, the copper, iron, and electrolyte, al existed in the region at the time of their creation. □is isn't actual y an out-of-place invention, it is more of an anomaly in time. But the question about the use for such devices is the one that remains unanswered.

□e Antikythera Computer

Another such anomaly is the Antikythera computer that could display with great accuracy the movements of the sun, moon, and the ve planets known to the Greeks. □e computer was discovered at the beginning of the last century when a sponge diver, Elisa Stadiatos, found the wreck of an ancient cargo ship. Lying on the seabed near the wreck were a number of statues, and those are what he remembered most when interviewed about his nd

some time later. Inside the ship were luxury items that included jewelry, wine, pottery, and bronze that dated to something like two thousand years earlier.

Also found were some green lumps that were extremely difficult to identify. Whatever they were, they had been housed in a wooden

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case that wasn't much larger than a shoebox. □ere seemed to be dials on the outside of the box and bronze gears on the inside. X rays showed a complex design of thirty or more gears. Analysis suggested that the device was a computer that could predict the position of the sun, moon, and known planets on any given date in the past and project those positions into the future.

□ere has been some controversy about that. Derek Price, described as a

science historian at Yale, used a number of X rays and reconstruction to come up with the initial claim that the device would calculate the position of the sun and moon. It was Michael Wright, at the Science Museum in London, who realized the overal potential of the calculator. But he also said that it appeared that Price had been overly generous as he calculated the number of teeth on some of the gears, and that in turn set up the proper ratios to move the various parts.

Fragments of the Antikythera machine, which is believed to be an ancient computer, are on display at the National Archeological Museum in Athens, Greece.

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□e device, as it was found, seemed to provide for the orbits of the sun

and moon, that is, using the Ptolemy system which put the Earth at the center of the solar system. It also seemed to have been built so that the orbits of both Mercury and Venus could be predicted as wel . □is seems to make

little sense. Why build such a device when there are another three planets in the Greek world: Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn?

Speculation is that there was another level that added these to the mix.

In fact, there have been Greek writings that suggest such things did exist in Greece at the time. Cicero told of his friend Poseidonius who had created just such a device that simulated the motion of the sun, moon, and the ve planets. It is also claimed that Archimedes had built a smal planetarium that could do this as wel . □is means, simply, that there is a written record to go along with the speculations of Wright and others about the purpose of the Antikythera computer.

In the end, what this seems to prove is that the ancient Greeks had the

knowledge to build the computer. □at it used the Ptolemy system rather than the Copernican system seems to suggest that it predates Copernicus,

which is consistent with other dating criterion. Copernicus, remember, said that the sun, not the Earth, was the center of the solar system, but then Copernicus was born centuries a□er the Antikythera computer was built and that knowledge wasn’t available to the Greeks.

□e Plains of Nasca and Other Strange Markings

Before we move on, we need to address the huge stone buildings and the bizarre markings the ancients le□ for us al around the world. I

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believe that in today's world, we understand that the pyramids were built by the Egyptians using primitive and ingenious techniques that we do understand.

Recent discoveries in Egypt, along with experimentation, have shown that they had the ability to build the pyramids. It is an impressive technological feat given the state of their civilization, but one that was within their capability and their knowledge. □ere is no need to postulate alien intervention to explain the pyramids.

If we look beyond those monolithic stone structures (guratively), we can see markings made on the ground around the world that are quite large and o□en visible only from above. □ese huge drawings suggest an advanced knowledge of geometry and an understanding of the environment in which

they were created. But do they suggest something that is alien to Earth?

On the Peruvian Plains of Nasca, a desolate plateau that is stil difficult to reach, are a set of lines that at ground level look almost random, but from above show stylized creatures and shapes. Two paral el lines run for quite a distance, never wavering. Another set of the lines look remarkably like a modern airport, though the lines were laid down hundreds of years ago by a people who had never heard of airplanes or airports. It is an accomplishment that suggests to some that they had help, and in this particular case that means extraterrestrial help.

□ese sorts of displays gave rise in the late 1960s and through the 1970s to the idea that ancient astronauts, meaning alien creatures, had interacted with humans just as we were beginning to build our civilizations. Many of these structures or lines, the reasoning went, were beyond the ability of the people of that time, so they had some kind of external help. □at help arrived on spaceships.

□e research in the area has provided an answer for the lines and that

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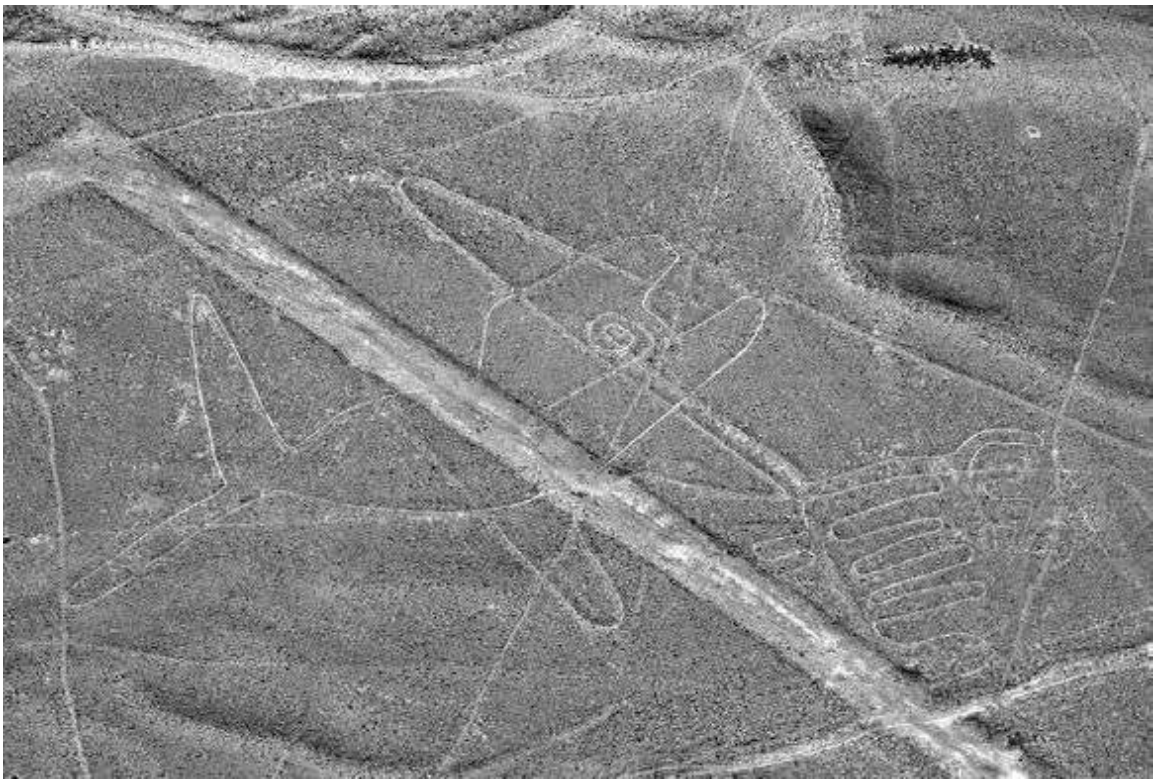
the people who lived in the area a thousand years ago had the ability to create the lines. It is a remarkable feat, but there is nothing about the lines



that suggest an alien presence. □at the nature of the drawings are visible only from the air above does not remove the religious nature of the symbols.

In other words, modern scientists believe that the lines were created to please the gods that resided high above the Earth.

It could be argued that those gods were in spaceships and were alien creatures. But the fact remains that the lines were created by humans, on the ground, without guidance from above. In other words, the lines do not represent a technological advance that was beyond the people in the area and if you are going to argue for alien creatures, then you need to produce some evidence of them. Nasca suggests nothing more than clever humans

working with the materials available to them.

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□e Nasca lines in Peru form pictures, like this whale, that can only be seen clearly from the sky, which is why some believe them to be alien-created.

Archeologists maintain, though, that the Nasca culture (400–650 C.E.) made them.

Archaeological research, much of it completed a□er the rst of the ancient astronaut theories was advanced, has provided us with a few answers. □e pyramids, for example, would have required a relatively large

population to construct them and now, on the Giza Plateau, the remains of the city where those thousands of workers lived (and some archaeologists believe they were Egyptian workers rather than Jewish slaves) have been discovered. Evidence about the methods used to construct the pyramids has also been uncovered. Nothing to suggest an intervention by aliens has been found. □e evidence suggests an ancient people who understood

engineering and construction and used the materials available to them.

□e real argument today concerns the age of the Sphinx located near the

pyramids. Some believe it was the rst object built and that evidence near it suggests it is thousands of years older than the rest of the

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structures on the Giza Plateau. Even with that, there is no real suggestion that ancient astronauts had a hand in any of the construction there. Just clever humans who were able to create something that has lasted thousands of years utilizing the materials they had available to them at the time of the construction.

Pyramid strutures can be found from Central America to Africa. □e Giza

pyramids in Egypt, shown here, are among the most impressive. Some people speculate the engineering involved to build the pyramids is too advanced for ancient peoples to accomplish, so they speculate aliens may have been involved in building them.

In fact, there is a hint about the evolution of the pyramid form and why the Egyptians settled on constructing them the way they did. First, is the step pyramid that gives an impression that the pyramid wasn't the original form, but that the Egyptians began with building a large square structure for

the tombs and then just added more and smal er squares on top of it. □e nal building was the step pyramid.

Second, is the bent pyramid. □is was a larger structure with steep sides.

It has been suggested that the Egyptians, as they worked on the bent pyramid, realized the structure would be unstable. □ey decreased the angle of the sides, resulting in the bent look. From there they began building the massive pyramids that we see in Giza and scattered around modern Egypt

today.

It would seem that alien creatures would have been aware of the inherent instability of such a steep-sided pyramid and warned the Egyptians about it before they made their error. It would also seem that alien creatures would have a good working knowledge of metal urgy, yet when they arrived, whether in Egypt, Mexico, Easter Island,

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South America (or anywhere else that proponents of the ancient astronauts claim they landed) the only material they could nd to work with was the local stone. □ey didn't provide our ancient ancestors with a knowledge of metal urgy. □ey didn't give them a good knowledge of the solar system, which the space travelers would have had, but rather provided them only with a knowledge that the

humans could have discovered for themselves with careful terrestrial observation without instrumentation. □e point here is that the

extraordinary knowledge that would have been a by-product of

extraterrestrial contact simply isn't in evidence anywhere.

□e Egyptian OOPTHs

□ere are a number of things found in the Egyptian tombs, or

representations drawn on the wal s of those tombs, that suggest a technology that was advanced, even for the Egyptians of the ancient world. One of these, known as the Dendera Light, is an image that seems to mimic lightbulbs in the modern world. It has a rounded front with what seems to be a slender lament passing through the center of a long, clear structure that might be the glass of the bulb.

Egyptologists have said that the carving is a mythological depiction of a Djed pil ar and a lotus ower giving birth to a snake in the center. It is a religious symbol that links fertility to the annual Nile oods and is not real y a light-bulb at al . And there is no physical artifact to go with it. Just the il ustration that some, from their modern perspective, believe might be a lightbulb. Without that physical evidence there is no reason to assume that it is a lightbulb.

□e Saqqara Bird is another example of this same thinking. □is is a bird-shaped, wooden artifact found in 1898 during the excavation of the Pa-di-Imen Tomb. It is, according to the various dating techniques, at least 2,200 years old and is made of sycamore.

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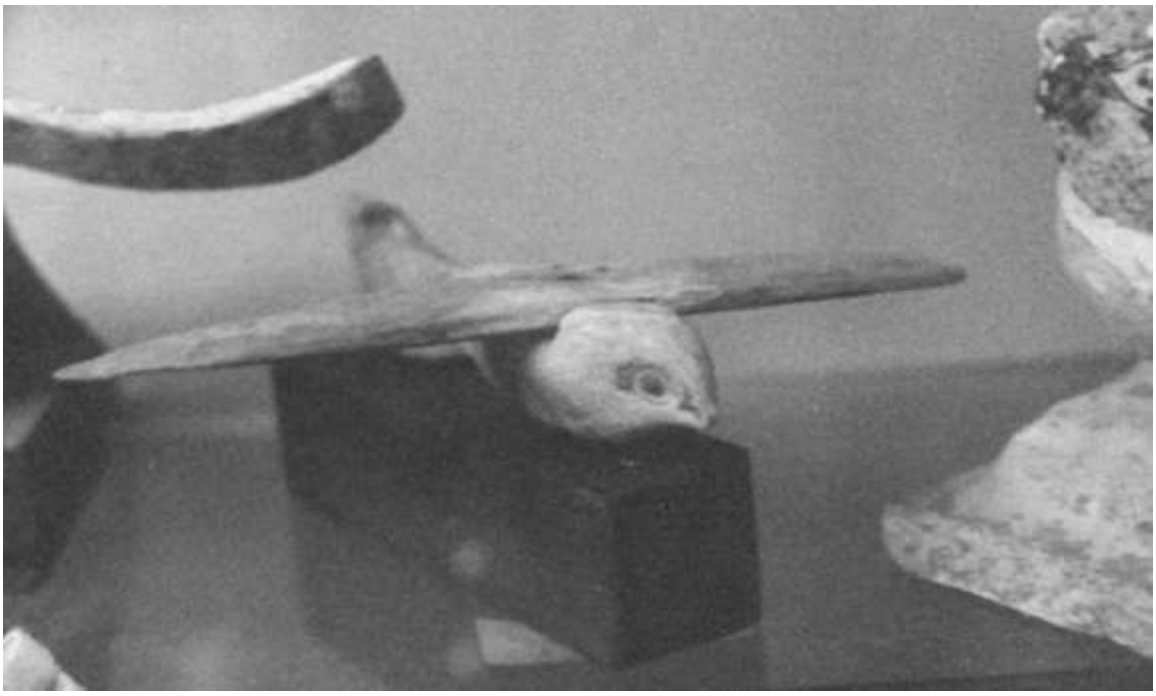
According to traditional archaeologists, the Saqqara Bird is a religious or ceremonial object that was created in a form that represented the most important of the Egyptian gods, including Ra and Horus. □ere are other suggestions about its purpose, including a weather vane and a toy. It should be remembered that when no obvious answer presents itself, the conclusion drawn by modern scientists is that the artifact had a religious or ceremonial signi cance.



□e Saqqara Bird was discovered by Dr. Khalil Messiha, who believed it to be a working model of a glider.

Dr. Khalil Messiha, a physician, an archaeologist, and a

parapsychologist, thought that the Saqqara Bird was some sort of monoplane or glider. He believed that it would y and that the vertical stabilizer (tail) had been broken off the rear of the plane sometime in the past. He built a model of it that was six times larger than the original and added a stabilizer. He insisted that he made his model y.

Martin Gregorie, who designed and built gliders, also made a model of

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the Saqqara Bird out of balsa. He couldn't duplicate the results claimed by Messiha, even when he added a tail section and experimented with the design. He thought the object was probably a toy of some kind rather than a religious artifact.

Peruvian Dinosaurs (□e Ica Stones)

□e Ica stones are a col ection of andesite stones (basical y an igneous rock) that range in size from the very smal to what some have described as boulders. Carved on them are Inca and Aztec warriors riding and attacking dinosaurs (Tyrannosaurus rex and stegosaurs), extinct animals, scientists, medical doctors performing brain and heart surgery, and both land and star maps. □ey have not been carbon dated because they contain no organic materials that would al ow such testing.

□e best-known col ection of these stones is owned by Javier Cabrera Darquea. He is said to have started his col ection when he was presented with stone that held the image that he recognized as an extinct sh.

According to the story, Cabrera also began to supplement the col ection that had been begun in the 1930s by his father, who had found the original stones in the elds of the family plantation. With the help of a farmer, Basilo Uschuya, Cabrera gathered additional samples and his col ection eventual y reached more than 10,000 specimens.

□e whole case becomes muddied in 1996 when Cabrera stopped

practicing medicine and opened a museum to display his stones. While serving as a doctor, as a professor, and as the chief of the Department of Medicine at the University of Lima, he kept his interest in the Ica stones secret. But when he retired, he opened a museum displaying al the various stones he had gathered, grouped by subject.

Another man, Santiago Aguuto Calvo, an architect by trade, also bought

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many of the stones and began excavating pre-Inca tombs near Ocucaje in 1966, according to what he claimed. He wrote an article about the artifacts he was nding, believing that the Ica stones were part of a prehistory burial ritual that predated the Inca.

□is “Ica stone” from Peru has a drawing that appears to be some kind of

dinosaur.

Add to this the fact that something like the Ica stones were found by the Spanish in the mid- □eenth century. In other words, stones similar to those being displayed by Cabrera in his museum had been found by the Spanish

and described in their literature. □is seemed to suggest the Ica stones were not a modern hoax.

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Some of Calvo’s col ection was displayed in the Ica museum, but were

labeled as pre-Inca burial art. Eventual y the curator of that museum withdrew the stones from display when Cabrera’s ideas about the antiquity of his col ection began to gain notoriety. □e curator said that he now believed that the stones were the work of grave-robbers, or, in other words, faked. □e curator would no longer display them.

As if the story couldn’t become more convoluted, Uschuya, who had provided many of the stones to Cabrera (or more precisely sold them to

him), said that he had created them. Part of it was to inspire writers like Erich von Daniken, and part of it was to make money. But now, a□er the

stones had been featured in a BBC documentary and Uschuya was in trouble for sel ing Peru’s cultural history, he said that he had created them himself.

He said that he used school texts and comic books as inspiration for the etchings on the Ica stones.

One of them clearly shows a T-rex, but it is a version of the animal as it existed in the 1960s. □at is, the tail dragging on the ground with the animal standing nearly upright. In today’s world, scientists have changed their minds, believing the tail was a counterbalance used in hunting, and the posture was anything but upright. □is suggests that the confession of a hoax is accurate because the stone etchings re ected the image of the animals that is now outdated.

And because nothing is ever easy, Cabrera explained part of this by saying that many of the original stones had been copied, but that was so the copies could be sold legal y to tourists. Everyone agreed that there was no harm in creating replicas as long as it was understood that they were replicas and they were marked as such. Cabrera continues to claim that the original stones are not faked in any way

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and depict a world in which humans existed with dinosaurs, hunted them, and that the scientists of that long-ago era did perform brain surgery and understood the cosmos nearly as wel as we do

today.

What Have We Learned?

Fortunately, in our modern world, many of the questions we once asked about these ancient marvels can now be answered. While proponents of the ancient astronauts ask their same old tired questions, we have new answers for them. □e people around when those marvels were created did have the

capability and the technical ability to build the pyramids, or Stonehenge, or the statues on Easter Island. And when they ask why there were pyramids in Egypt and the New World, which implies communication among the

various cultures, al we have to do is suggest that the Mayan pyramids look nothing like the Egyptian pyramids other than in a basic form. □e connection simply isn't there.

What we are le□ with here are ancient peoples who created the lines on

Nasca because it amused them to do so and they had the ability to do it. □e Egyptians built the pyramids because they could and because their leaders ordered it done. None of what we see in these objects from our distant past requires the intervention of alien creatures, and there is no real evidence for this type of intervention.

□ere are literal y dozens of artifacts that have been linked to ancient and unknown civilizations or to alien races in the distant past. □e truth here, however, is that some of the Out of Place Artifacts have easy explanations. □ey aren't relics out of the dawn of time, but objects that have somehow become mixed into strata, or areas like seams of coal, that suggest great antiquity. □e explanation for many

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of them are just as the Smithsonian told me in that letter a couple of decades ago.

Others are artifacts that show a sophisticated understanding of the world by our ancestors, which tel s us they knew more about the world around them than we had believed. □eir observations of the world were precise and, while some of their theories explaining nature were more imagination than reality, they were able to deduce quite a bit that was right.

□at's not to say that there are easy explanations for everything we nd

mysterious. It means that sometimes we have underestimated the abilities of the ancient Greeks, Romans, or Egyptians. □ey understood more than we

give them credit for and were far more technological y advanced than we sometimes believe them to be.

But there is something else and that comes out of the anomaly reported

in the Scientific American. It's a little thing, just a tilted "L," that makes a name into a secret Masonic sign. It might be that this tale of a metal, bel -

shaped vessel from solid rock had some signi cance to a smal and selected portion of the population. For whatever reason, an editor inserted Tubal Cain into that article and we might never know the reason for that.

But there are stil anomalies that we cannot explain. □ere are nails pul ed from solid rock and we don't know how they got there. We have seen, as we study al these things, that sometimes we have no answer and there are some things that we might never know. Al we can do is look at the clues and try to understand the world around us.

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The Great Airship sightings, as they are usualy reported, took place in

late 1896 and early 1897 and foreshadowed, to a great extent, the modern UFO era. Al categories of sightings from occupant reports, abductions, cattle mutilations, and landings to crashes were reported during this rst acknowledged UFO wave. □is is an observation that is sometimes frightening to the modern UFO researcher for more than one reason, which we'l examine as we work our way through al these reports.

□e Beginning

□is wave began, semi-official y, on the evening of November 17, 1896, when, according to the Sacramento Evening Bee, a light like an "electric arc lamp propel ed by some mysterious force" passed over Sacramento, California, and touched off the rst of the reports of what would become known as the Great Airship. Once the story had been printed, other newspapers started to make their own announcements and print their own

stories about the growing airship controversy, o□en taking contrary views simply because they couldn't say anything positive about their competitors.

□e name of the game then, as it always is, was circulation, and no one wanted to help the enemy build his circulation while his own

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decreased.

So, early on the San Francisco Chronicle claimed that the Sacramento airship was a hoax, but also noted that those who had made reports were

quite sincere. □e implication here was that the good citizens of the area, who might buy the Chronicle, were not the perpetrators of the hoax. □ey

were just fooled by it, whatever it might have been, and those other individuals who were perpetrating the hoax.

□en, on November 20, just three days a□er the original sighting, the Chronicle quoted Professor George Davidson who believed the whole episode was the result of “a sort of free masonry [remember Tubal Cain of the last chapter] of liars. Half a dozen fel ows got together, sent up a bal oon with some sort of an electric light attached, and imagination has done the rest. It is a pure fake.” (Are there any paral els here to what we have seen time and again in the modern era? Hot-air bal oons l ed with candles launched in the 1960s sparked hundreds of UFO reports.)

Even so, the airship returned to Sacramento on November 20 and then

appeared over San Francisco on November 21. Passengers on a streetcar in Oakland saw something that was described as a “peculiar-looking

contrivance.”

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A drawing of the mysterious airship that appeared over Sacramento,

California, was printed in the Daily Record-Union on November 18, 1896.

As the one newspaper, the San Francisco Cal , was reporting these events, the other, the Chronicle, was suggesting that a lawyer, George D.

Col ins, had met with the inventor of the airship. Col ins, according to the newspaper, had seen the machine, which he described as being 150 feet long with two canvas wings and a rudder like the tail of a bird. □e airship had been built in Orovil e, California, by a wealthy man who had moved there from Maine. As soon as he corrected some minor technical problems, he would y the ship over the city so that everyone there could get a good look at it.

□e Examiner sent a reporter from San Francisco to Orovil e, but the man could nd no one in the town who knew of the inventor, or a wealthy

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man who had recently moved there from Maine, or of the airship itself. He could nd no place where a 150-foot-long airship could be hidden. Without any sort of corroboration for the story, he concluded that it was nothing more than a hoax. □at was supposed to signal the end of the airship.

To make matters worse, if possible, lawyer Col ins approached stil another California newspaper to tel them that the Examiner had misquoted him. □e quotes about the airship had come from a friend of Col ins' that the Examiner had interviewed and which they had failed to verify with him.

Col ins said that everything his friend had told the reporter was a lie.

Confusion reigned as suspicion then fel on a dentist as the real airship inventor. He had come from Carmel, Maine, and spent time

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tinkering with

his many inventions. He seemed to t the pro le of the mysterious airship inventor as described by others. It was al egedly con rmed by the inventor that his attorney was Col ins, but he claimed that al his inventions had to do with dentistry and not with huge, mysterious airships. □e dentist, sick of al the unwanted attention, hid out somewhere other than his home, and reporters, searching for a story, ri ed his personal possessions, nding nothing other than copper dental l ings.

Drawing of the airship that appeared in the Chicago Times-Herald, April 12, 1897.

Once it was believed that the identity of the inventor and the location of his invention had been discovered, the story began to fade, only to be revitalized almost immediately. On November 24, 1896, the Oakland Tribune reported that George Carleton knew the inventor, or at the least knew his name. Of course, Carleton was sworn to secrecy and wouldn't reveal the name of the inventor to reporters. Al he would do was con rm that the cra□ was being tested in the Orovil e area, which t nicely with al the other stories that had been reported, but offered nothing in the way of evidence.

W.H.H. Hart, one-time attorney general of California, announced that the inventor, irritated with Col ins for talking too much, had red him and hired Hart. According to Hart, there were two airships, and his job was to consolidate the interests of those who owned them. Hart seemed to believe that one of the airships would be used for war, and there was talk of dropping dynamite on Havana, Cuba, where the Spanish were causing a great deal of trouble at the time, according to the newspapers. Less than two years later, the United States would be at war with Spain a□er newspaper reports blamed the Spanish for an attack on the USS Maine in Havana Harbor (which of course, is a whole other matter and is, of course, paral el with events of the world today … that is, blame for an attack on U.S.

interests and then the inevitable war on foreign soil).

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Hart's con rmation of the airship, and a "secret informer's" new information that the ship had been own from Orovil e to a barn in Sacramento, seemed to prove, to some at least, the existence of the airship. It had been own every night, according to various sources, and that was exactly what people had been reporting. □e voices heard by some on the

ground were identi ed as engine noise rather than human speech. No one

bothered to explain why the ship was only own at night or over populated areas where it could be seen and then reported in the press.

Hart, however, began to retract a number of his earlier statements, suggesting that he had never actual y seen the airship himself. He had talked to a man who had claimed to be the inventor but had no proof that such was

the case. He had been convinced of the reality of the airship by the unidenti ed inventor and by those reports that were coming in every night.

□at seems to be a sort of circle … the airship must exist because it is reported every night, but no one has seen it on the ground or during the day.

□at didn't end the sightings, however. □ey continued to be made al

along the California coast. While some of the sightings were little more than nocturnal lights, that is, strange lights seen in the distance late at night, other sightings were more detailed.

On November 26, 1896, for example, Case Gilson said that he had seen

an unlighted airship in the sky above Oakland. Gilson said that it "looked like a great black cigar with a shlike tail … the body was at

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least 100 feet long and attached to it was a triangular tail … the surface of the airship looked as if it were made of aluminum….“

□e First Contactees?

□en others reported they had seen the airship on the ground. John A.

Horen told the San Francisco Examiner that he had met a stranger who took him to a remote location where the two of them boarded the airship. Horen was then treated to a trip to Hawaii and back, made in a single night. Horen’s wife, however, found the tale ridiculous, saying that he had been sound asleep at home, next to her, when the ight had al egedly taken place.

What is interesting here, and the reason to take a momentary pause, is

that Horen’s story of a trip on the cra□ would be mirrored about □y years later when other men, such as George van Tassel, would claim extraordinary trips on ying saucers. Like Horen, they would have nothing more than an incredible tale with no proof, but there were thousands who believed them.

And unlike Horen, they didn’t go to Hawaii, but took trips to the planets in the solar system.

To take this a step further, his tale also mirrors some of the abduction accounts being made from the 1960s on. While some of the earlier stories are of people abducted while outside, they did evolve into reports of aliens in the house, taking one spouse while the other slept, unaware of the home invasion. Horen’s tale seems to predict those that would come more than a half-century later.

And then in another report that would mirror those of the late 1940s,

shermen near Paci c Grove, California, supposedly saw an airship land on the water and then oat slowly to shore on December 2. It was occupied by three men, one of whom was addressed as “captain” by the other two. □e

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shermen were told that the ship required some repairs and that the captain was not yet ready to announce his invention to the rest of the world. □at would come later.

More people came forward with tales of meeting with the crews of those

piloting the airship. In most cases, the airship had some kind of mechanical problems requiring it to land for a short period for repairs. George Jennings told reporters that a traveler had entered his business, a man Jennings claimed to have recognized but whom he would not identify, who was one of

the airship inventors. Jennings said he knew the man wel , and there had been no reason for him to lie about his invention. No one seemed to wonder if Jennings might not be the one lying since he had no proof that anyone he knew had invented the airship.

Alien Abduction?

What might be the rst recorded claim of an attempted alien abduction, and associated with the airship stories, came during the early evening of November 25, 1896. Colonel H.G. Shaw said he, with a companion, Camil e

Spooner, le□ Lodi, California, “when the horse stopped suddenly and gave a snort of terror.”

Shaw claimed that he saw three gures who stood nearly seven feet tal

and were very thin. □ey looked like humans and didn’t seem to be hostile so Shaw tried to communicate with them. According to Shaw, they didn’t seem to understand what he was saying and responded with a “warbling” in a type of monotone chant.

Shaw continued his description, reported in the newspapers of the day

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in great detail, saying, “□ey were without any sort of clothing, but were covered with a natural growth as so□ as silk to the touch and their skin was like velvet. □eir faces and heads were without hair, the ears were very smal , and the nose had the appearance of polished ivory, while the eyes were large and lustrous. □e mouth, however, was smal and it seemed … they were without teeth.”

Shaw also said they had smal , nail-less hands and long, narrow feet. By touching one of the creatures, he discovered that they were nearly weightless, though he didn’t explain how touching them produced that deduction. Shaw said he believed they weighed something less than an ounce. Again, he didn’t explain how he had come to that conclusion.

With Shaw close to them, they tried to li□ him with the intention of carrying him away. When they couldn’t budge either Shaw or his companion, they gave up and ashed lights at a nearby bridge where a large

“airship” was hovering. □ey walked toward the cra□ using a swaying motion and only touching the ground every □een feet or so. □en, according to Shaw, “With a little spring they rose to the machine, opened a door in the side, and disappeared….“

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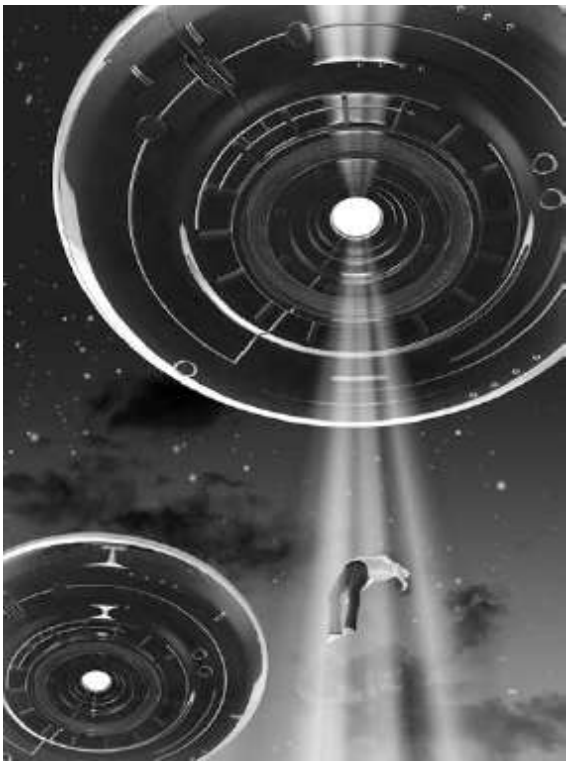

Abduction reports dating back to the late nineteenth century bear similarities to more modern stories.

A week or so later, in early December 1896, two shermen, Giuseppe Valinziano and Luigi Valdivia, said they had been held captive for a number of hours while the airship crew made repairs. □e “captain” of the cra□

would only provide vague clues about the origin of the ship, but did say the invention would be announced to the world within a few weeks. When the

repairs were completed, the men were al owed to leave the ship unharmed.

No announcement was ever made.

Once again, it is necessary to note that these tales mirror those told today about ying saucers. □e descriptions of the aliens are exotic, but stil based on the human design. For those who accept the modern ying saucer

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reports, these similarities should be quite troubling. If there is nothing but imagination behind the airship reports, then why can't the same conclusion be drawn about modern ying saucers?

By the middle of December 1896, the airship stories began to fade once

again from the California newspapers. On January 16, 1897, for example, former attorney general Hart reappeared to say that the airship inventor had

le California and was on his way to Cuba where war between the United States and Spain was brewing. Apparently, the airship inventor, a patriotic American, thought his invention could be of some use against the Spanish.

Shaw also said they had small, nail-less hands and long, narrow feet. By touching one of the creatures, he discovered that they were nearly weightless

e Great Airship of 1897

In February, however, the airship craze began to spread from California. e Omaha Daily Bee reported on airship sightings in the south-central part of Nebraska that had begun in the fal of 1896. e airship had been seen about ve hundred feet above the ground as it hovered for nearly thirty minutes giving witnesses a good view of it, according to those early reports.

Near Big Springs, Nebraska, on February 17, three men reported a

"barrel-sized light" rising into the air and saw it descend rapidly as it shot out sparks. On February 18, the Kearney Hub reported that the "now famous California airship inventor is now in our vicinity."

Late in the month, February 26, a group of people at a railroad depot in Fal s City, Nebraska saw a "big searchlight, moving in a westerly direction, apparently at a speed of about sixty miles an hour, and in

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the same portion of the sky a red light, much like a [railroad] switch lamp, was plainly seen.”

□e light seemed to be moving toward Stel a, Nebraska, and railroad dispatcher Ike Chidsey wired the agent there. Within minutes the light was seen over Stel a. Other reports were made from Beatrice, Wymore, Hastings, Kenesaw, and Hartwel , al in Nebraska. Some of the witnesses said that they had seen the light for several nights but had been reluctant to report anything for fear of ridicule, though there is no indication that other witnesses had been subjected to any teasing. (Another example of the airship stories matching those of the modern ying saucers.) □ose reports, coming from railroad dispatchers and telegraphers, would foreshadow a much larger and more complex wave of sightings that would begin in a few weeks and

that would be reported throughout the entire Midwest.

□e wave seemed to explode on March 29, 1897, when the airship was

again reported over Omaha, Nebraska. At the same time it, or rather another airship, was chasing a farmer near Sioux City, Iowa. Robert Hubbert said that he was riding his bicycle and hoping to see the airship “that the whole country is talking about.” An anchor was being dragged along the ground by the airship and it grabbed Hubbert, hauling him from his bike. Suddenly, and “none too soon,” according to the newspaper account, his pants ripped

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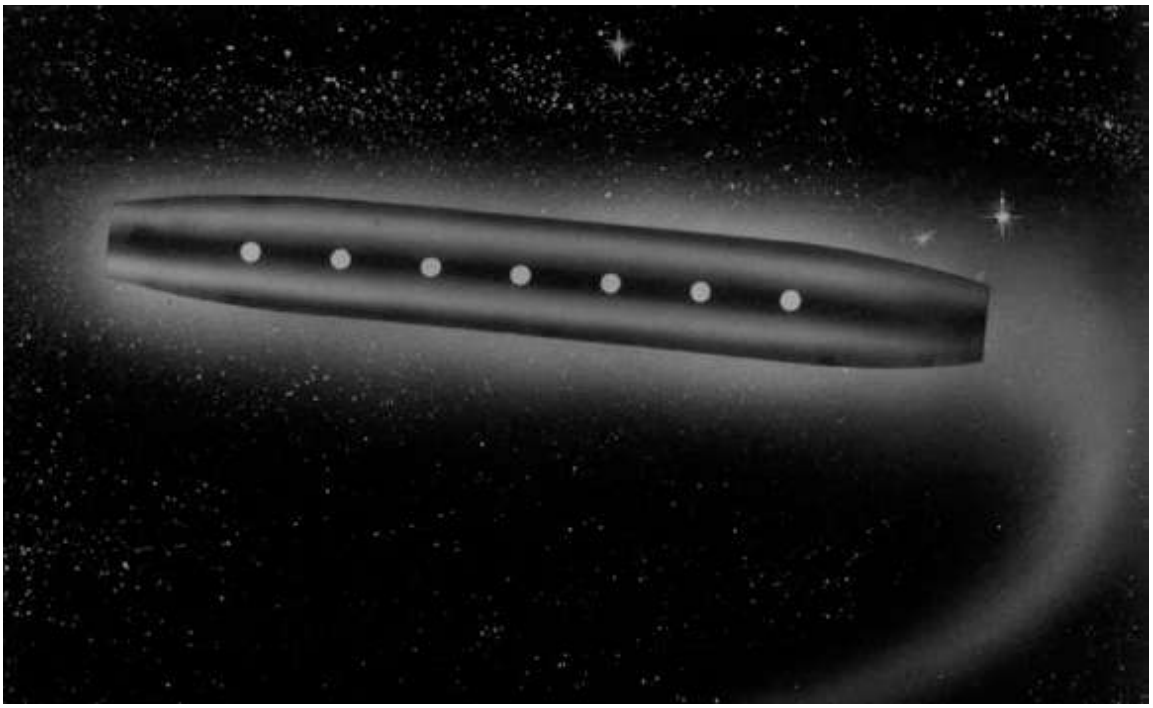

and Hubbert fel back to the ground. Although he was physical y unhurt, he was angry. He told a reporter that it was criminal “for the skipper of the ship to let a grapnel drag on the ground.”

Not all UFOs are saucer-shaped, of course. □ere have been several sightings of cigar-shaped cra□, for instance, such as this one based on what a DC-3 pilot and copilot saw over Alabama.

□e very next night, March 30, the people of Denver, Colorado reported

the airship overhead, and on April 1, it was seen above Kansas City, Kansas.

Hundreds reported it as it paused from time to time to play with its searchlight among the clouds. About half an hour a□er it disappeared from Kansas City, it was reported over Everest, Kansas, not al that far away.

Witnesses there said that it resembled a cigar with wings and that it glowed brightly while hovering.

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On April 2, it was seen near Decatur, Michigan. According to the story,

the rst evidence of the airship was a bright light and then behind it, a dark shape. □e witnesses said that they could hear a sharp crackling sound and voices.

On April 10, the airship was over Il inois. From Chicago, thousands of

people watched an airship displaying its lights. Later the same evening the

airship made at least one landing. As it descended near Calinvil e, Il inois, a crowd began to gather. □e airship settled into a pasture and the curious started forward. Apparently, the crew thought the townspeople were too close or were afraid they might be hostile. Before they got close, the ship took off.

Also on April 10, the airship was seen over several Iowa towns. Clinton, just across the Mississippi River from Il inois, reported it rst, then Ottumwa farther to the west, and later Albia. □at was the third time that the residents of Albia had seen the ship. □ey also claimed the rst report from Iowa.

On April 12, the airship was reported to have landed once again.

According to the eyewitnesses, the object was large, cigar-shaped, with wings on the sides and a canopy over the top. A man climbed out and walked around as if looking for damage. A□er □een minutes, the airship

“rose to a great height” and disappeared to the north.

On that same evening, an engineer on a train near Chicago said he watched the airship for several minutes but “was forced to turn my attention back to my duties.” When he looked up again, the airship was far ahead of the train and near Lisle, Il inois, he lost sight of it.

Trouble for the Airship

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□e middle of April brought the reports of a series of landings in Iowa. □e Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette noted the airship had landed on the Union Station in the “wee morning” hours and that several local citizens were taken on board. Charley Jordan quickly made his story known and even signed an affidavit attesting to the truthfulness of his tale of his ight. He was described as “never tel ing but a few lies and then only about things of importance.” Also on board for the ight was W.R. Boyd, who said his whole purpose in going was to “get as high as possible so that he could learn about the condition of the post office.” □e members of the strange crew were reported to be tired from their long journey but promised to lecture about their trip quite soon. □e topics to be discussed included the unlikely subject of Hel .

□e night a□er the Cedar Rapids tale, the airship was captured in Waterloo, Iowa. □e Waterloo Courier reported that the unusual cra□ “came to rest on the fairground” and one of the pilots went to the police station to ask that they guard his ship. Arriving at the fairgrounds, the police found a large, twin-cigar-shaped object. Al during the day people came to see the ship, the rst tangible object to be found that didn’t disappear into the night or vanish like the morning mist. □at made the story a little more plausible than those being told in so many other locations, including the original sightings in California.

A heavily accented “professor,” who claimed to come from San

Francisco, told of the dangerous ight across the country that ended in tragedy when the leader of the expedition fel into the Cedar River. Attempts to rescue the man failed, and they landed nearby to attempt to retrieve the body.

By late a□ernoon, interest was waning, and then ended abruptly. □e professor was recognized as a local man, E. A. Feather. He dropped his accent and the ship, such as it was, was nal y removed from the fairgrounds, but not before hundreds had seen it and more than one newspaper article had been written about it.

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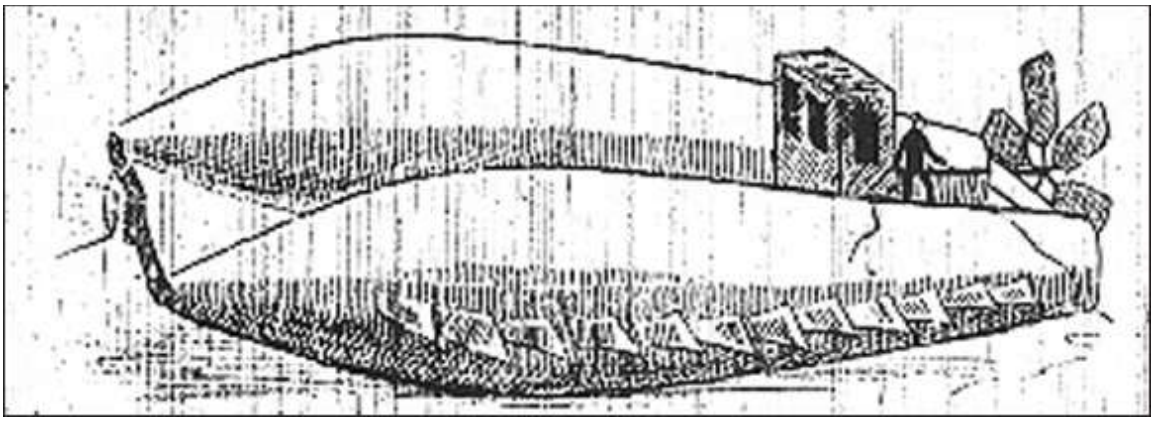

□e airship was also making the rounds in Texas during April. A man

from Denton, north of Dal as, said that he had seen the object and it was de nitely some “kind of manufactured cra□.” From Hil sboro, Texas, came

the report of a “bril iant light, as if coming from an arc light….“ and then it was seen gliding over a eld nearby.

Drawing of the Waterloo airship.

It seems necessary to point out here that many of these descriptions sound suspiciously like Venus. A bril iant light, like that of an arc light that is bluish white, describes Venus at the height of its bril iance. □is, too, is another aspect of the modern UFO phenomenon. Venus can take on a bril iance, and when it is close to the horizon seems to have a shape behind it. Without a search of the astronomical records, and some idea of the direction from the sighter to the object, I can only speculate, but this is a point that needs to be made.

Early on the morning of April 17, two men from Rhome, Texas, said that

they saw the airship heading west at 150 miles per hour. □e same day, the Fort Worth Register, which “hardly cares to repeat it,” reported that a man traveling near Cisco, Texas saw the airship landed in a eld. Several men were standing around and Patrick Barnes went over to talk to them. At the ship he was told they had

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some kind of engine trouble but would be leaving soon to go to Cuba to “bomb the Spanish.” By one o’clock they had repaired the cra and they took off for the Ozarks to train for their mission.

In Paris, Texas, a night watchman said that he saw a cigar-shaped cra,

two hundred feet long, with large wings. Later, in Farmersvil e, several people said they heard the crew of an airship singing.

e Aurora, Texas, Crash

e Aurora airship crash story, as it was told just days later, suggests the airship appeared about dawn on April 17, 1897, came in low, buzzed the town square and then continued north, toward the farm owned at the time

by Judge Proctor. ere it hit a windmil and exploded into a shower of debris, damaging the Judge’s ower garden and house, not to mention his windmil . e townspeople rushed to the scene and found the badly dis gured body of the alien pilot. T. J. Weems, a Signal Corps officer (think of an 1897 intel igence officer here), thought the pilot was probably from Mars (because in 1897 they didn’t think beyond the solar system).

Being good Christians, and apparently because no one had anything else

to do, they buried the pilot a er a short memorial service that a ernoon.

ey also gathered several documents covered with a strange writing found in the wreckage and picked up tons of material including silver and aluminum that came from the wrecked airship. Not surprisingly, al that evidence has long since disappeared.

And that’s it. No fol ow-up stories as tourists ocked to Aurora to see the wreckage or visit the grave (and remember here that in Waterloo people arrived al day to look at the ship). No mysterious scientists

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arriving to inspect the wreckage and add their voices to the speculation. No Army response, though one of their own was on hand to report what he had seen and apparently con rmed the authenticity of the crash. And nal y, most importantly, no one ever produced those documents or bits and pieces of the wreckage, though there had been tons of it, at least according to the newspaper reports. Somehow it al disappeared in the years a□er the event.

□e story died at that point, and then was resurrected in the 1960s by

UFO researchers a□er Frank Masqquelette, a reporter of the Houston Post, wrote about the crash a□er the tale had been dormant for six decades.

Suddenly the story of the tragedy reappeared and Aurora was nal y on the map with those very scientists, researchers, and tourists making the trek to north Texas.

Dr. J. Al en Hynek asked Wil iam H. Driskil of Dal as to nd out what he could about the story. Driskil found Oscar Lowry, who was a boy in 1897

and who had lived in the area for al his life. But Lowry said the story was a hoax and blamed a stringer for the Dal as Morning News, S. E. Haydon, for inventing the tale. Lowry said that Weems had been a blacksmith and Proctor didn’t have a windmil .

A large number of people, including Hayden Hewes of the now defunct

International UFO Bureau (and remember, coauthor with Brad Steiger on a

UFO book), Jim Marrs, who suggested the story was real, and even Walt Andrus, the former International Director of the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), at various times journeyed to Aurora in search of the truth. □ey al reported they found a strange grave marker in the Aurora cemetery, they found strange metal with metal detectors, and they gathered reports from longtime Aurora residents or their

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descendants who remembered the story, remembered seeing the airship, or remembered parents talking about the crash. And, as to be expected today, there was also discussion of government attempts to suppress the data. To them, that made the story of the crash real.

(N)o one ever produced those documents or bits and pieces of the wreckage, though there had been tons of it….

□e problem here is that I beat most of these people to Aurora by several months and even years to conduct my own investigation. I talked to some of those same longtime residents who told me in the early 1970s that nothing had happened there. I talked to the historians at the Wise County Historical Society (Aurora is in Wise County) who told me that it hadn't happened, though they wish it had (now probably thinking of Roswel and the tourist dol ars pouring into that New Mexico town). Etta Pegues, one of those historians, con rmed that the story was a hoax.

As had Driskil , I learned then that T. J. Weems, the famed Signal Corps officer was, in fact, the local blacksmith. I learned that Judge Proctor didn't have a windmil , or rather that was what was said then. Now they suggest that he had two windmil s. I wandered the graveyard, which isn't al that large (something just over 800 graves), and found no marker with strange

symbols carved on it, though there are those who suggest a crude headstone with a rough airship on it had been there at the time. I found nothing to support the tale and went away believing, based on my own research and

interviews conducted on the scene, this to be another of the airship hoaxes.

A crash story like those today that have little in facts but that are long on speculation.

Metal col ected by al those other, later researchers, when analyzed here, in the United States, turned out to be nothing strange or

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unusual. Some of it was later analyzed in a Canadian lab and their results mirrored those of American labs. So much for the idea that the government, in the guise of the CIA, the Air Force, or the mythical MJ-12, conspired to suppress evidence of the Aurora UFO crash. I mention this only because, once again, we have the foreshadowing of the modern ying saucer age by the Great Airship.

And isn't it interesting that none of the metal supposedly gathered by the town's residents has ever surfaced? □e metal analyzed was always recovered by researchers with metal detectors. Isn't it also interesting that the strange grave marker has since disappeared and there is no real photographic record of it? □ere should be pictures for al the research that has been done and the single picture that has turned up showed not an airship but a coarse triangle with circles in the center. And isn't it interesting that there were never any fol ow-up reports from Aurora? First the big splash with the crash and then nothing for more than sixty years.

Even worse, a book, Pioneer History of Wise County by Cliff D. Cates, published in 1907, only ten years a□er the crash, mentioned nothing about it. He wrote about □y years of history but in the 470-plus pages of his book, mentioned nothing about the crash.

In fact, in 1897, there were ten newspapers in Wise County but none of

them carried a word about the airship crash. □e only newspaper to report on it was Hayden's. Other airship stories that seemed to have more basis in fact were carried in several newspapers.

□e Aurora crash wasn't the only report of the destruction of the airship.

In the early 1970s a longtime resident of San Angelo, Texas, claimed he had seen the airship y into a ock of birds and explode in late April of 1897. He

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didn’t try to gather any of the wreckage, he didn’t take friends or family out to see the ruined airship, and he apparently did nothing to report it back in 1897. It wasn’t until the early 1970s that he made his rst mention of the airship crash and then to a reporter for a newspaper rather than to some local official or UFO researcher. He had nothing to validate his claim except that he was old enough to have seen something in 1897.

e LeRoy, Kansas, Calfnapping

On the other hand, the airship, or rather, other airships, were stil intact and stil ying. According to the reports, including that in the Yate’s Center Farmer’s Advocate, Alexander Hamilton, a Kansas farmer, heard a

disturbance among his cattle on Monday, April 19, 1897, and got out of bed to check. Hovering over his cow lot was the airship. It was, according to Hamilton, cigar-shaped, about three hundred feet long with some kind of a glass-encased carriage under it. Inside were six strange-looking beings, but who were human enough that Hamilton identi ed two men, a woman, and

three children.

His affidavit, which has been published more than once, and which had,

according to some researchers, made the story more real, said:

Last Monday night [April 19] about half past ten we were awakened by a noise among the cattle. I arose thinking perhaps my bul dog was performing some pranks, but upon going to the door, saw to my utter amazement, an airship slowly descending over my cow lot about 40 rods from the house.

Cal ing Gid Heslip, my tenant, and my son, Wal , we seized some axes and ran to the corral. Meanwhile the ship had been gently descending until it was not more than 30 feet about the ground and we came up to within 50 yards of it….

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It was occupied by six of the strangest beings I ever saw. □ere were two men, a woman, and three children. □ey were jabbering together but we could not understand….

When about 30 feet above us, it seemed to pause, and hover directly over a three-year-old heifer which was bawling and jumping, apparently fast in the fence. Going to her, we found a cable about half an inch in thickness …

fastened in a slipknot around her neck, one end passing up to the vessel…. We tried to get it off but could not, so we cut the wire loose, and stood in amazement to see the ship, cow and al , rise slowly and sail off….

Link □omas, who lives in Coffey County about three or four miles west of LeRoy, had found the hide, legs, and head in his eld that day. He, thinking someone had butchered a stolen beast and thrown the hide away, had brought it to town for identi cation but was greatly mysti ed in not being able to nd a track of any kind on the so□ ground….

And to bolster the authenticity of the story, the local newspaper, as wel as other men in town, attested to the honesty of Hamilton, suggesting they al believed his, wel , unbelievable tale. □ey claimed they had known Hamilton for years and “that for truth and veracity we have never heard his word questioned and that we do verily believe his statement to be true and correct.” □ese men included an attorney, a doctor, a Justice of the Peace, a banker, and even the postmaster. If no other report from 1897 was to be believed, this one certainly had al the credibility that those others lacked.

Jerry Clark reported that Hamilton had been a lawyer, had served in the

Kansas legislature, and was a very successful stock dealer. □ose who knew him suggested that he was an honest man. In 1897, they had little reason to doubt his tale.

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In the early 1970s, Clark managed to track down the relatives of Hamilton and interviewed an elderly woman who remembered Hamilton returning from town, chuckling about the story he'd invented because it would be published in the newspaper. While that evidence might not convince a true believer, an article that appeared in the Atchison County Mail on May 7, 1897, should do it. Hamilton told the reporter, "I lied about it." □ose who signed the affidavit about Hamilton's veracity were members of the local liars club. In other words, they al were in on the joke.

UFOs have been blamed for livestock-napping and mutilation in rural

America.

Even worse was a letter found by Dr. □omas "Eddie" Bul ard of the J.

Al en Hynek Center for UFO Studies. In the May 7, 1897, edition of the Atchison County Mail, Hamilton wrote that he had fabricated the tale. □ere simply is no reason for it to continue to circulate as true. □e evidence that it was invented has been uncovered and reported.

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But the sad thing here is that many of the UFO books written in the 1960s and the 1970s, before we al began trying to get to the bottom of these stories, report this case straight. □ey suggest it is true but they didn't have the bene t of the research done by Jerry Clark and Eddie Bul ard. We now know that this story of a cattle mutilation, complete with the carcass found in an empty eld with no footprints near it, is a hoax.

□e Alien Connection

Hamilton's tale, one of the most widely reported and accepted by some of the most skeptical of the UFO researchers, was also one of the few that suggested an outer space connection rather than an Earthly tradition. Most of those who reported seeing or communicating with the pilots and crews

suggested they were fel ow Americans, some just trying out their new invention, and others suggested they were on a mission to Cuba to attack the Spanish.

One such tale of extraterrestrial visitation came from Reynolds, Michigan, on April 14. According to the witnesses, a ying machine, as opposed to the airship, came down half a mile from town. A dozen farmers who had watched it maneuvering overhead rushed to the landing site. Inside was a giant, manlike creature whose speech was described as musical.

Although there were what looked to be polar bear hides inside the cabin, the alien creature didn't use them and seemed to be suffering greatly from the oppressive heat.

One of the farmers tried to approach the ship but was kicked by the giant, resulting in a broken hip. Although the crew was unfriendly, the ship apparently didn't take off and people from surrounding towns hurried to the scene. □e creature tried to talk to the people but eventual y gave up.

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On April 15, near Linn Grove, Iowa, the airship appeared overhead. Five

local men fol owed it for four miles where it landed in the country. When the men got close to the ship, it spread four massive wings and li□ed off. □e occupants threw out two boulders of an unknown material. □e occupants

were reported as “queer-looking beings with extraordinarily long beards.”

□e boulders, of unknown material, have long since disappeared so that no analysis was ever attempted.

In another report that would foreshadow much in the modern era, W. H.

Hopkins claimed that he had seen one of the airships sitting on the ground in a clearing. Next to it, according to him, was the “most beautiful being I ever beheld.” She was naked, of course, with hair that hung to her waist. She was picking owers and had a lovely, musical voice. Lying in the shadow of

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the ship was a naked man, with a long beard and long hair, who was fanning himself as if warm.

As Hopkins approached, the woman screamed and ran to the man.

Hopkins attempted to tel them that he meant them no harm and eventual y communication was established. He asked where they came from and they

pointed at the sky, “pronouncing a word which, to my imagination, sounded like Mars.”

George Adamski stands before an artwork depicting a beautiful alien woman.

Hopkins was given a tour of the ship. □e two beings seemed interested

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in his clothes and his gray hair. □ey also examined his watch “with the greatest wonder.” Final y he exited the ship and they ew away, “laughing and waving.”

Fi□y years later, contactees such as George Adamski and George van Tassel would tel similar tales of beautiful people in strange ying machines and sometimes in as little clothing, meaning, of course, none at al . Some

would claim the aliens were from Mars, others Venus, but al suggested an interplanetary, as opposed to interstel ar, origin for the cra□. □is is simply another example of the airship stories mimicking those that have been reported during the modern era.

In Merkel, Texas, not al that far from Aurora (given the size of Texas), dozens of people returning from church saw the ship, its anchor snagged in a barbed wire fence. Climbing down a rope in a blue sailor suit was a smal man. When he spotted the people, he scurried back up into the airship. □e people cut the anchor free and kept it on display for several weeks. It has, quite natural y, disappeared.

□ere were additional sightings in May. As a single example is the report from near Cassvil e, Indiana, on May 3. Edwin Shaffer, while passing a gravel pit, noticed a cigar-shaped, forty-foot-long airship sitting in it. He claimed that it was “handsomely furnished on the inside and the aerial cra□

was inhabited by a crew of midgets who spoke no English.”

But the intense interest in the airship was dying out and by the summer

of 1897, there were almost no new reports. By the time the modern era of ying saucers began to be reported, □y years later, almost no one remembered the airships. UFO researchers did not begin to dig for the reports until the 1960s, though there had been a few discussions about them earlier. Captain Edward Ruppelt, at one time

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the chief of Project Blue Book, the official Air Force investigation, mentioned the wave brie y in his book,

□e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects. Others, such as Charles Fort, devoted a little space to the stories, commenting on their unusual nature but not examining them with anything close to a critical eye.

□e Stories Resurface

It wasn't until the 1960s that the airship reports began to enter the UFO

literature with any regularity. Jacques Val ee discovered the Alexander Hamilton calfnapping and reported it in his Anatomy of a Phenomenon without any critical remarks about it. Val ee took the report at face value. It was then quoted in a large number of books arguing for the reality of UFOs, in general, without anyone bothering to search further, until Jerry Clark made the effort.

Val ee's discovery, the notations made by Charles Fort and others, inspired many to search old newspaper records. Hundreds of accounts were discovered. I spent a lot of time in newspaper morgues and later with micro lm, looking for stories of the airship. □ose early sightings were sometimes reported as straight news, while other sightings had a tongue-in-cheek quality that is o□en missing in modern newspapers.

□e problem was that those doing the research in the 1960s made an invalid assumption. □ey believed that what had been printed in the newspapers in 1897 was the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. □e reality was that many of the airship accounts, just as some of the

"straight" news accounts of wars, disease, and other disasters in those days, were invented to sel newspapers. □e public was interested in the airship, so reporters and editors gave them what they wanted to read. □ey reported tales of the airship overhead and

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speculations about its origins with little regard to the facts unavailable to them. We see the same thing today as the twenty-four-hour cable news channels l hours with speculation by reporters who have little expertise but who, for the most part, look good delivering their opinions. And when that runs out of steam, they invite two, three, or four other reporters to argue about the reality of the latest news crisis for the bene t of their audience.

Al this is borne out in a sad tale from Burlington, Iowa, that was described at the time as one of the “meanest and most discouraging stories of the entire lot.” Members of the Burlington newspaper staff sent up a common tissue paper hot-air bal oon so that it would carry over the city.

□e newspaper began to get reports of the airship which they then dutiful y

published. One of the most distinguished men in the town came forward to say that he had not only seen the airship but had heard voices from it, and that he would sign an affidavit about it. □at convinced the Burlington reporters that the entire airship episode was a fake. I wil note here that tissue paper hot-air bal oons were quite prevalent during the height of the 1960s UFO wave as wel , and caused a number of interesting reports.

Some newspapers from 1897 published letters from outraged citizens who claimed they had been identi ed as witnesses to the airship and who

wrote that they had never seen it. Jerome Clark reported that J.H. Tibbles of Rochel e, Il inois “wrote the Chicago Record that a report in a Chicago paper notwithstanding, no one in Rochel e had seen an airship on April 3; ‘I took it upon myself to hunt down the report, and for several days I have been busy doing so…. I have not found a person who had seen another person who

claimed to have seen it.’“

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Eddie Bul ard noted “how seldom airship reports turned up in the columns devoted to news from outlying communities. □e content of this

correspondence includes sicknesses, births, deaths, marriages, crop news, and mention of anything new or changing in these areas where newness or

change was rare. A crime was a major event, and an airship sighting would surely rate a mention. A□er reading about a lot of Sunday picnics, weekend visits, and ne hunting dogs, I can say with safety that those mentions are lacking.”

In other cases it’s clear that the reporters and editors didn’t believe the stories, though they were wil ing to report them. □e airship story that originated in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was reported as straight news but it is apparent that the reporters and the editors didn’t take it seriously. □ey did, however, report the story right up to the point that the Cedar Rapids tale had been trumped by the Waterloo story. Remember, in Waterloo, they had

the ship. And that story was reported as straight news during the rst day, until the “professor” was recognized and the hoax was revealed.

Bul ard’s research corroborates this theory. He was suggesting that those reporters and stringers in the outlying areas were more reliable than those in the city. He was suggesting that the newspapers of the day were making it up

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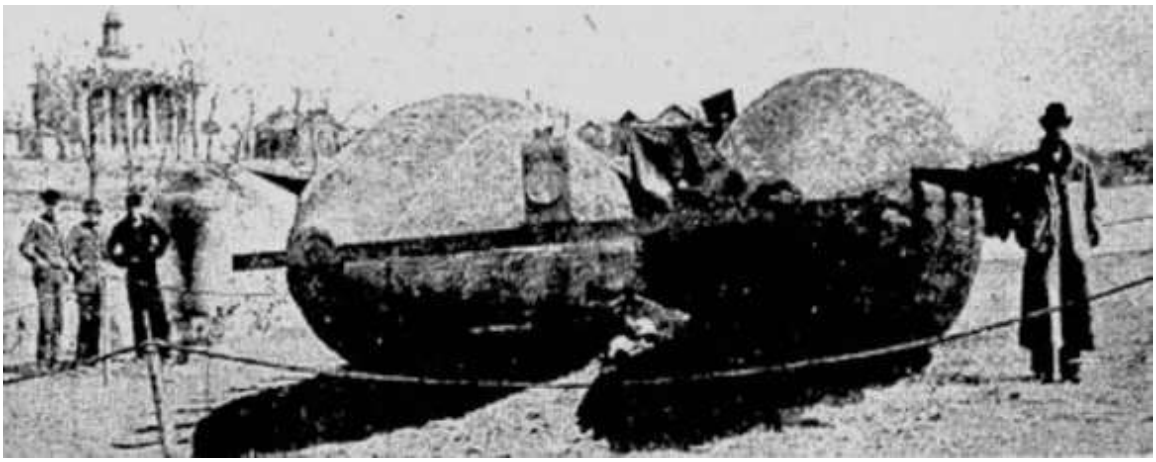

as they went along. □e story from Burlington, Iowa, certainly suggests this is true and even shows the lengths to which they would go.

Clark, who has studied the wave in great detail, noted that by the mid-

to-late 1970s “it was becoming increasingly evident that hoaxes played a far more prominent role than anyone had imagined.” He was suggesting that unlike the modern era in which the hoaxes are believed to be a relatively minor fraction of the whole, in 1897, a great number of the reports, including those that had seemed to be the most reliable and most interesting, were later proven to be hoaxes.

□e “airship” used in the Iowa hoax as seen in a photograph printed in the Waterloo Daily Courier in 1897.

As mentioned, Alexander Hamilton had invented the tale of the

calfnapping and his friends who signed the affidavit were fel ow members of a liar’s club. □e Linn Grove landing had never happened, according to a man who lived there in 1897 and remembered nothing about it. □e Aurora,

Texas, crash was more fantasy, written by a man who wanted his town back on the map. In fact, in histories of the area published just years a□er the crash, there is no mention of it. And nal y, the Merkel,

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Texas anchor-dragging airship was just another of the hoaxes that l ed the newspapers and is strangely reminiscent of a similar report from the Middle Ages.

But there were others who failed to jump on the bandwagon in 1897.

□e Des Moines Register in 1897 put forth another theory about the reliability and the genesis of the airship, at least in Iowa. □e reporters noted that the airship was mentioned in Cedar Rapids on April 14 and on the next

night it was seen near Fair eld. It was also seen near Evanston, Il inois,

“worrying the Chicago papers greatly.” □e most remarkable account of the airship came on April 15 near Pel a, Iowa. According to the newspaper,

“many people, among them the Western Union operator, had seen the machine … if it was true, the Pel a airship looked like a sea serpent, a bal oon, a winged cigar, and a pair of bal oons hitched together with a car swung between them, a car with an aeroplane and three sails, and 19 or 20

other things.”

□e Register article continued by reporting that the telephone in the Leader (another Iowa newspaper office) rang and the town of Stuart was

“found to be clamoring for fame.” □ey had seen the airship. □e story went out over the wire and the Western Union operator said that he could produce dozens of witnesses if anyone cared. He said that the airship had come from the southeast, was traveling about □een miles per hour, and had a red light in front and a green one in the rear. □e operator’s feelings were hurt when he was asked if it was an April Fool’s joke.

While the conversation between the newspaper reporters and the

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telegrapher was evolving into a heated argument, a report came in that the airship was now over Panora, Iowa. □e Western Union operator there said

that they had seen the airship over their own town coming from the direction of Stuart. It was now moving faster, but had the same appearance as it did in Stuart which the Register labeled as a “neat attempt at getting around the description.”

As the argument increased in intensity, the number of telegrams about

the airship also increased. From Clinton, Iowa, came a telegram saying the airship had own over the town on April 10. Although the airship was reported to have been seen by several prominent and reputable citizens, the telegram was almost apologetic in its tone.

Immediately came a telegram from Ottumwa reporting they had seen the airship more than once. “An Eldon (Iowa) operator discovered the airship at 7:25 P.M. Ottumwa was prepared for its appearance. It was seen here by half the population. Al agreed that it appeared as a red light moving up and down and traveling northwest. Albia caught sight of it at 8:10 and at

9 o’clock it was stil visible…. □is was the third time that it has been seen in Albia.”

□e Register reported, “□e fact seems to be that the airship has been exploited beautiful y by telegraphers along certain lines of the railroad. □ey managed it beautiful y for a while and never al owed it to travel too far too fast.” □e reports were always wel done, showing a certain amount of genius. But the rest of the public began to take a hand and the airship reports got too numerous. Some would con ict and it became evident that

someone would have to have a whole eet of airships for al the sightings to be true.

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What al this suggests is that the vast majority of the airship stories were hoaxes. Some originated by individuals such as Alexander Hamilton or the people in Cedar Rapids, others were initiated by the newspapers looking for something spectacular to report, and the last bunch were created by the telegraphers along the railroads who were bored late in the evening.

It is now clear that there was no Great Airship invention just before the turn of the last century. Heavier-than-air ight would become a reality in six years. Airplanes would soon begin ying across the country, then across the oceans, and nal y around the world. Great Airships would be built by the military to search for enemy subs, or to hover above battle elds so that generals could gather intel igence about enemy movements. Eventual y there would even be airship ights across the Atlantic. ese would end when the Hindenburg exploded in New Jersey in 1939.

But there is no evidence that a human inventor had own a Great Airship in 1896 or 1897 anywhere in the country. Although some stories suggested the announcement of the airships was about to be made to the world, it never was. Or, those on their way to Cuba to bomb the Spanish never made it to drop those bombs.

What we know today is that the vast majority of the airship cases can be explained as hoaxes but they shouldn’t be completely ignored.

A few modern investigators have suggested that there was a solid core of airship sightings. Something had to trigger the tales in 1896. ey have suggested that we examine, more closely, those stories told in the Sacramento area in November 1896. ose might provide a clue as to where

and why these stories began to circulate. It might be that some kind of airship was seen in northern California but then newspapers in other parts of the country climbed on the bandwagon.

But even if that is true, and even if we could identify the core of solid sightings, there isn’t much for us to learn from them today. ere are

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no witnesses le to tel us what they real y saw in 1896 and 1897 and we have no real records or photographs to examine. Few have interviewed anyone who was around in 1897 and who claimed to have seen the Great Airship.

Ed Ruppelt, while chief of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, wrote that he had had a long conversation with a man who had been a copy boy at the San Francisco Chronicle at the time of the airship. He remembered almost nothing about those long-ago events except to tel Ruppelt that the editors and a few others at the newspaper had seen the airship themselves.

ere were so many tales invented by newspaper editors and reporters

that a single fading memory of a copy boy means very little today. Maybe something unusual was seen near San Francisco and Sacramento. Maybe there had been some kind of cigar-shaped object ying over California so long ago. ose seeing it did the best they could in describing it, using the terminology available to them at that time. Maybe there was a sighting or two of something that was not invention, imagination, delusion,

misidenti cation, or outright fabrication in the fal of 1896.

What we know today is that the vast majority of the airship cases can be explained as hoaxes but they shouldn't be completely ignored. ey provide us with an insight that wil help us better understand the UFO situation as it stands today.

And that is why the airship stories are so frightening for UFO

researchers today. How many of those stories mirror the reports made at present? Everything we nd in the modern UFO era was predicted by the

airship stories in 1897. at means that if we can write off the airship stories

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as hoaxes and misidenti cations, why can’t we do the same thing today? □e evidence we nd is just as nebulous and nearly unobtainable.

Airships Other □an □ose of 1897

Clark has said to me, on many occasions, that the airship transcends 1897.

□ere were stories of an airship seen much earlier, and, of course, stories of it long a□er 1897.

Clark, in his massive □e UFO Encyclopedia, reported that on March 29,

1880, over the tiny town now known as Lamy, New Mexico, three men on a

late evening walk heard voices coming from above. □ey described the bal oon or airship for □e New Mexican this way:

□e construction of the bal oon was entirely different to anything of the kind ever seen by any of the party, being in the shape of a sh, and at one time was so low that fanciful characters on the outside of the car, which appeared to be very elegant, were plainly seen. □e air machine appeared to be entirely under the control of the occupants, and appeared to be guided by a large fanlike apparatus…. □e bal oon was monstrous in size, and the car, as near as could be judged, contained eight to ten persons.

□e men reported that an object had been thrown overboard and they

were able to recover it. □is was a ower with a silklike paper that seemed to resemble the markings on Japanese tea chests.

□e next day the tale got stranger. □ey found a cup of “strange workmanship” and the ower with the silk paper, which were displayed at

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the local railroad depot. □ese were bought by an archaeologist who was working at a nearby site.

On April 5, it was reported that a group of tourists were al owed to see the objects. One of them, a wealthy man from China, recognized the lettering as Chinese, but more astonishing was that he said it was a note from his ancee. □e tourist said that the airship was obviously from China.

According to the newspaper, the man knew that his ancee was a passenger on the airship, on her way to visit her sister in New York, and knew he would be passing through the smal New Mexican town. She'd tossed over the items overboard, sure that he would nd them, as a surprise for him.

□is tale, told some seventeen years before the Great Airship began its journey, is certainly reminiscent of them and suggests a human inventor, a human crew, and a terrestrial explanation. As Clark wrote, "… the New Mexican report is absurd on its face. Vehicles of the sort described in the newspaper account were not ying or even could y, in the America of the nineteenth century…."

In a somewhat similar vein, which means simply that the identity of the

airship was terrestrial, in March 1892, there were many newspaper accounts of "mysterious" bal oons over Europe. □ey were seen along the border of

Polish Russia and Germany, and the speculation was that they were a way of sending German spies into the region. □e observers said, according to Clark, "the vehicles appeared ful y maneuverable … not subject to the vagaries of the wind … and even able to hover for as long as forty minutes."

What is important here is that at the time, there was talk of ight, bal oons had been around for more than a century, and a parachute had

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been demonstrated in Paris in 1797 by Andre-Jacques Garnerin. He leaped

from about 6,500 feet using a parachute that was twenty-three feet in diameter.

When Clark suggests there is a core of solid sightings of an airship in

the late nineteenth century, there is documentation to back up his claim.

In 1872 there was a ight of a gas-powered dirigible. □at came some

twenty years a□er a coal-fed, steam power airship was own. And in 1897

the rst al -metal dirigible was own in Europe.

When Clark suggests there is a core of solid sightings of an airship in the late nineteenth century, there is documentation to back up his claim. During the stories in the United States about al the airships and the talk of training to bomb the Spanish in Cuba, there were experiments going on in Europe to produce the kind of cra□ that was claimed to be seen over the United States.

In fact, in 1873, the New York Daily Telegraph sponsored an attempt to y across the Atlantic in a huge, 400,000-cubic-foot bal oon that carried a li□

boat. As they were attempting to in ate it, a tear appeared and the bal oon col apsed. □at was the end of that attempt.

Clark reported in his UFO Encyclopedia that the media, magazines, and

newspapers of the day were l ed with stories of airships. Designs for airships were being published and many of them cal ed for powered ight.

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By 1897, many had already been own in Europe with more and more talk

of traveling by airship over long distances.

In 1903, the Wright Brothers changed al that with their rst powered

ight in an airplane and, by 1905, had managed to demonstrate complete turns in the aircra□, which had kept them alo□ for more than half an hour.

Within eleven years, the rst aerial combat would take place as pilots and observers on both sides began shooting at each other with pistols and ri es during the First World War.

Al this tel s us about the inspiration for the Great Airship stories. Given what was happening, it was not outside the realm of possibility that some of the tales were true, especial y when we remember that airships had been own in Europe. Here, in 1897, there were no airships, at least none that were reliably reported in the press, but that doesn’t mean there wasn’t something ying about American skies.

□ere might have been an inventor in a faraway corner of the United States that successful y created an airship. It wouldn’t be long a□er the March and April wave of sightings that a true airship would be own in the United States. In the end, we are le□ with a large number of fakes and frauds, and a host of interesting stories but proof of nothing. Besides, if there was a solid core of sightings whether here, Asia, or Europe, the culprits were humans and not alien creatures.

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What is considered the modern era of UFO sightings began on June 24,

1947, when Kenneth Arnold, a Boise, Idaho, businessman, saw nine

objects ash across the sky near Mt. Rainier, Washington. To that point, no one had actual y talked about UFOs or ying saucers and the realm of alien life was solely that of science ction. True, earlier in the century scientists had been talking of life on both Mars and Venus, and respected astronomers actual y drew diagrams of what they believed to be the canal system on Mars. Some scientists thought of ways to communicate across interplanetary space, nearly al of them visual. One man suggested digging gigantic trenches in the Sahara Desert, l ing those trenches with oil, and setting them on re. His plan, which covered dozens of square miles, was to create a beacon in geometric form that Martian astronomers could see.

It is also true that the Great Airship stories included reports of what could only be alien creatures. □ose stories, when a location of the aliens was mentioned, was usual y somewhere inside the solar system with Mars

and Venus as the two most likely candidates.

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War of the Worlds

In 1938 Orson Wel es broadcast his War of the Worlds radio drama and sent thousands into the streets frightened by the thought of an alien invasion.

Given the timing, just before the beginning of the Second World War when tensions were at the highest, it might not be so surprising that so many reacted with so much fear. Within hours the country knew that the invasion from Mars was little more than the imaginative rambling of Wel es and his radio theater company. Of course, it could be said that Wel es had put the idea of Martian invaders into the heads of mil ions of people, even if no one acted on that notion for another nine years.

Depiction of a UFO sighting by Boise, Idaho, surveyor E. G. Hall.

A□er the Second World War people were ready for something more, something exciting. □e horrors of the war, culminating in the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in ashes of atomic heat and

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light, had unleashed a new scienti c age. Life, it was thought, was not con ned to the earth and there was speculation about who, or what, lived on other planets.

Not that any of this was in the overal consciousness of the country. It was there, in the background, sort of hiding from everyone and popping up in science ction movies and in some science books that speculated on the possibility of alien life.

□en Arnold made his sighting of the strange objects, ying one behind

the other, at about 9,500 feet at a speed he estimated to be more than 1,500

miles per hour while he was ying over Washington. □is was something that clearly wasn't made in secret projects hidden in the mountains of New Mexico, and it wasn't something that was made by the Soviet Union as they began to press for world domination. □is was something strange that had

no ready explanation, other than it was strange and almost impossible to believe.

When Arnold landed later in the a□ernoon on June 24, in Yakima, Washington, he told the assembled reporters what he had seen. In the course of describing the objects, he said they moved with a motion like that of saucers skipping across the water. □e shape, however, according to drawings that Arnold completed for the Army within days of his sighting, showed objects that were heel-shaped with a blunt nose and no noticeable tail assembly. In later drawings, Arnold elaborated, showing objects that were crescent-shaped with a scal oped trailing edge and even a clear canopy over the cockpit.

Hearing Arnold's description of the motion of the objects, reporter Bil

Bequette coined the term " ying saucer," though in the next few days, most reporters, and then scientists and Army officers, would cal the objects ying discs. □e term, then, according to most investigators,

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didn’t original y refer to the shape of the objects, but to the style of their movement through the air.

Ronald Story, a UFO researcher and editor of □e Encyclopedia of Extraterrestrial Encounters, reported that in early 1992 he was in southeastern Washington, not al that far from Pendleton, Oregon, when he happened to see an editorial written by Wil iam C. Bequette. Story cal ed Bequette and asked him about his interview with Arnold back in 1947, and about the invention of the term “ ying saucer.” Bequette said that Arnold

had described the objects as saucer-shaped. So the world might owe the origin of the ying saucer to Arnold a□er al .

But then nothing is ever very easy in the world of UFOs. Story said that he had read somewhere else that Bequette had said something different about it. Story wrote, “I can only repeat what he con rmed to me: that he was indeed the man who coined the term ‘ ying saucer’ which was based on Arnold’s description….”

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Orson Welles famously played a hoax on the entire United States with his 1938

broadcast of an adaptation of War of the Worlds by Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Many listeners to the radio program thought Martians were actually invading Earth.

Arnold Briefs the Military

Later Arnold would provide the military with a written description of the events. In a document that was original y classi ed as secret, but that has long since been released, Arnold wrote:

On June 24th … I had nished my work … and about two o'clock I took off for Chehalis, Washington, airport with the intention of going to Yakima, Washington, … I ew directly toward Mt. Rainier a□er reaching an altitude of about 9,500 feet, which is the approximate elevation of the high plateau from with Mt. Rainier rises…. □ere was a DC-4 to the le□ and to the rear of me approximately □een miles distance, and I should judge, a 14,000 foot elevation…. I hadn't own more than two or three minutes on my course when a bright ash re ected on my airplane. It startled me as I thought I was too close to some other aircra□. I looked every place in the sky and couldn't nd where the re ection had come from until I looked to the le□ and the north of Mt. Rainier where I observed a chain of nine peculiar looking aircra□ ying from north to the south at approximately 9,500 foot elevation and going, seemingly, in a de nite direction of about 170 degrees.

□ey [the objects] were approaching Mt. Rainier very rapidly, and I merely assumed they were jet planes. Anyhow, I discovered that this was where the re ection had come from, as two or three of them every few seconds would dip or change their course slightly, just enough for the sun to strike them at an angle that re ected brightly on my plane…. I thought it was very peculiar that I couldn't see their tails but assumed they were some type of jet plane. I was determined to

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clock their speed, as I had two de nite points I could clock them by…. I watched these objects with great interest as I had never before observed airplanes ying so close to the mountain tops…. I would estimate their elevation could have varied a thousand feet one way or another up or down….

□ey ew like many times I have observed geese to y in a rather diagonal chain-like line as if they were linked together…. □eir speed at the time did not impress me particularly, because I knew that our army and air forces had planes that went very fast.

A number of news men and experts suggested that I might have been seeing re ections of even a mirage. □is I know to be absolutely false, as I observed these objects not only through the glass of my airplane but turned my airplane sideways where I could open my window and observe them with a completely unobstructed view…. When these objects were ying approximately straight

and level, there were just a black thin line and when they ipped was the only time I could get a judgment as to their size.

Arnold's sighting didn't gain front-page status immediately. Stories about it appeared in newspapers a day or two later usual y on page eight or nine or even farther back, and then with a comment about strange objects in fast ight. It was, at that time, the story of an oddity that caught the attention of various city editors at various newspapers. Arnold claimed later that he thought he had seen some sort of the new jet aircra□ and he was a little concerned about breaking the security around it.

Corroboration for Arnold?

Arnold wasn't the only person to see strange objects in the sky that day.

Fred Johnson, listed as a prospector, reported watching ve or six disc-shaped cra□ as they ew over the Cascade Mountains about the time Arnold had lost sight of his. He said they were round with a slight

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tail and about thirty feet in diameter. □ey were not ying in any sort of formation and as they banked in a turn, the sunlight ashed off them. As they approached, Johnson noticed that his compass began to spin wildly. When the objects nal y vanished in the distance, the compass returned to normal.

A□er learning of the Arnold sighting, Johnson wrote to the Air Force on

August 20, 1947, saying:

“Saw in the portland [sic] paper a short time ago in regards to an article in regards to the so cal ed ying disc having any basis in fact. I can say am a prospector and was in the Mt Adams district on June 24th the day Kenneth Arnold of Boise Idaho claims he saw a formation of ying disc [sic]. And i saw the same ying objects at about the same time. Having a telescope with me at the time i can asure you there are real and noting like them I ever saw before they did not pass verry high over where I was standing at the time. plolby 1000

□. they were Round about 30 foot in diameter tapering sharply to a point in the head and in an oval shape. with a bright top surface. I did not hear any noise as you would from a plane. But there was an object in the tail end looked like a big hand of a clock shi□ing from side to side like a big magnet. □ere speed was far as I know seemed to be greater than anything I ever saw. Last view I got of the objects they were standing on edge Banking in a cloud.”

Yours Respectful y,

Fred Johnson.

In July 1947, the Army Air Forces had asked the FBI to interview some

of those seeing ying discs and Johnson was one of rst interviewed. □e

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FBI report contained, essential y, the same information as the letter that Johnson had sent to the Army. □e FBI ended their report, saying,

“Informant appeared to be a very reliable individual who advised that he had been a prospector in the states of Montana, Washington, and Oregon for the past forty years.”

Dr. Bruce Maccabee, a one-time physicist with the Navy, now retired, and who has a private interest in UFOs, wrote in the International UFO

Reporter that the Johnson sighting is important, not because it takes place near where Arnold saw the nine objects, but because it seems to be an extension of the Arnold sighting. It provides independent corroboration for the Arnold sighting, strengthening that case, and reducing, to ridiculous, some of the explanations that have been offered to explain it by those who believe that there is absolutely no alien visitation.

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Artist’s reconstruction of Arnold’s UFO encounter.

Importantly, Johnson also made one claim that Arnold had not. He said

that his compass was spinning wildly when the objects were near, suggesting some kind of magnetic interference. If that is accurate, we have not only another witness to what Arnold saw but we have the objects interacting with the environment and providing us with a clue about them. □is interaction would be an important part of some of the other major UFO cases that would later be reported to the Air Force.

Dr. Donald H. Menzel, the late Harvard scientist, decided that Johnson was being honest in his report, that is, Johnson was not lying about it.

Johnson, according to Menzel, was merely mistaken in his analysis of the sighting. Menzel wrote that Johnson had probably seen bright re ections from patches of clouds. It didn’t seem to matter to Menzel that Johnson saw the objects only about a thousand feet over his head, watched them through a telescope, and had them in sight for almost a minute before they vanished, disappearing into a cloud. It didn’t matter that he said nothing about clouds.

He said that his compass was spinning wildly when the objects were near, suggesting some kind of magnetic interference.

In the Project Blue Book les is a note about the Arnold case, which was labeled as “Incident No. 37.” □e Air Force officer who reviewed the case wrote, “□e report cannot bear even super cial examination, therefore, must be disregarded. □ere are strong indications that this report and its attendant publicity is largely responsible for subsequent reports.”

Not content with a negative note in the le, the unidenti ed officer also wrote, “It is to be noted that the observer has pro ted from this story by sel ing it to Fate magazine.”

Here, for the rst time were two accusations that would be made about

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many UFO cases, that is, the witnesses were in it for the money, and a suggestion that UFO reports were the result of the “snowbal effect.” It seems to suggest that Arnold invented his tale with an eye to writing a story about it for Fate. □ere is no evidence to support this, and Arnold had not written any articles for any magazines prior to his sighting nor did he seem to be interested in writing articles for anyone. □e editors at Fate, and Ray Palmer speci cal y, who would become one of the rst and most vocal proponents

of the ying saucers, induced Arnold into writing about what he had seen.

Arnold sent him a copy of the report that had been created for the Army.

□e point, then, becomes irrelevant. □e article doesn’t seem to have been a motive for Arnold, but more of a serendipitous reward for seeing and

reporting the objects in the rst place. It was Palmer who thought up the idea for the article and not Arnold.

As a sort of ancil ary thought, what would have induced Arnold to invent this tale in the rst place? It wasn’t as if there had been many sightings, or that Arnold would have heard about them even if there were.

□e initial motivation for money doesn’t seem to be there. A□er the rst of the reports in the newspapers, it became clear that some of the others jumped on the bandwagon and began inventing tales about their UFO

encounters. But with Arnold, he was the rst to have his story reported national y, and we have to ask, where he would have gotten the idea to do it in the rst place? And the evidence for the hoax, at least in this case, is somewhat thin.

Second, though it has been studied by many, and suggested by more, that

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a single UFO report wil generate additional reports, that doesn't seem to be the case. When studying these things in statistical detail, it seems that the news media (or in 1947, the press) learns about them a□er many sightings have already been made. O□en the rst of the articles comes about the time the peak of the wave of sightings has been reached and the number of sightings is actual y dropping off.

Once the rst of the sightings enters into the public arena, then there are those who come forward with their tales, many of which are hoaxes. A□er

Arnold's sighting got national attention in late June, and a□er the July 4

weekend when there were a number of interesting and credible sightings, the number of stories in the newspapers and the number of hoaxes then skyrocketed.

But the initial point remains the same. □e number of sightings reported

can be correlated to the number of newspaper articles, but that is a side effect. □e number of legitimate reports doesn't seem to be geared to the reporting in the newspapers.

□is is, of course, splitting a ne hair. □e sightings are not tied to the newspapers and publicity but the number of reports are. In other words, people who have made sightings now know where to report them. □ese stories suggest, if nothing else, that the newspaper or radio stations are

interested in the reports. People then report the sightings that they have made over the last several days and weeks.

More Sightings

So, a□er the Arnold report, we learn that on June 25, nine objects ying in a loose formation were spotted over Kansas City, Missouri. Two oval-shaped objects, one chasing the other, were reported by

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Lloyd Lowery near Pueblo, Colorado. In Utah a lone man reported a lone object. Other reports came

from Oklahoma, where C.E. Holman saw two light discs, and near Glens Fal s, New York, where Louis Stebbins saw a single, reddish object.

On June 26th, reports were made in Utah, Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas,

and New Mexico. Glenn Bunting in Logan, Utah, saw a single object ying

at high speed. Two hunters made an independent report of the same object.

ere was a series of sightings in and around Cedar City, Utah. Royce R.

Knight, the airport manager, saw a lone object in fast ight heading to the east. Although in sight for only a few seconds, Royce saw it long enough to give a description and then report that it disintegrated into a bal of blue ame. I suppose that could mean it turned so that the tail ame was toward him and that would suggest chemical propulsion rather than an interstel ar drive.

Charles Moore (who isn't related to the Charles Moore who would gure

in the Roswel case or Project Mogul, and who would have his own UFO

sighting some two years later), driving near the airport in Cedar City, saw a lone object ying to the east. He saw no exhaust or ame near it but did say that it looked like a bright meteor, which, of course, could explain the sighting. Daylight meteors are rare and if a witness is thinking more in terms of ying saucers than natural phenomena he might think of a meteor as a spacecra . If it is the same one that Knight saw, then the nal breakup of the meteor might explain the sighting better than anything else.

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On June 27, in the area around White Sands, New Mexico, Captain E. B.

Detchmendy saw a high- ying object that seemed amelike. At about the same time, 9:50 A.M., W. C. Dobbs, who worked at White Sands, reported that he too had seen a high- ying, amelike object.

□e government denied the existence of the objects and said they were not some kind of secret project. Scientists suggested everything from spots in front of the eyes to a form of war mass hysteria.

In Capitan, New Mexico, not al that far from White Sands and fairly close to the ranch that would gure in the Roswel crash, a Mrs. Cummins and her neighbor, Erv Dil , saw a single shining object descend. □ey thought it landed in the nearby hil s. □ey said there was a yel ow ame and a whistling sound.

It probably should be noted here that White Sands isn’t al that far from many of the New Mexico sighting locations and some kind of rocket or missile testing could explain some of the sightings. Except

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there had been a rocket that had crashed near a town in Mexico in May and al rings had

been suspended while the scientists tried to gure out what was happening.

On July 3, they attempted another launch, but the rocket never made it off the pad, although it did injure some of those working on the experiment.

□is moratorium on launches eliminates rockets or missiles, at least during the end of June and early July.

On June 27, the sightings became more widespread and took on an international avor with reports coming from Canada, Australia, and New

Zealand. □e ying saucers, at this point, began to enter the public conscious. □e newspaper reports and discussions about them had been scattered and light in the days preceding. Now they were beginning to get play everywhere and they were moving to the front page.

Speculation about the ying discs ran from some kind of secret military

cra□ to spacecra□, though the theories suggested Mars and Venus as the home of the visitors, if they proved to be interplanetary. □e government denied the existence of the objects and said they were not some kind of secret project. Scientists suggested everything from spots in front of the eyes to a form of war mass hysteria. Newspapers were publishing everything about the ying saucers now, including the wildest speculations. In today's world the talking heads on cable TV, even those without expertise or an original thought, would be tel ing us what was real y happening. It wouldn't matter that whatever they said, today would be overtaken by events of tomorrow. □ey would change their positions, and continue to pretend they understood, and continue to issue nonsense, just as those experts did in 1947.

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In the United States, on June 28, the ying saucers moved east with reports in Mississippi and Alabama. In Montgomery, four military officers reported a high- ying object that moved with sudden bursts of speed and

was in sight for about twenty- ve minutes.

Military Searches and Reactions

□e sightings throughout the United States continued and the speculation

about them didn’t change. □e military was taking an interest in them, and on the west coast, during the July 4 weekend, squadrons as far south as Muroc (now Edwards Air Force Base) in California and as far north as Seattle in Washington were alerted about the possibility of these things being seen close at hand. In Oregon, one squadron was not only equipped

with gun cameras, but were involved in an airborne search.

It was also during the July 4 weekend that several sightings were made

that were better than normal. First, Captain E. J. Smith of United Airlines said that ve objects, smooth on the bottom, had sort of joined formation with him. He and his crew clearly saw the objects and watched them for forty- ve minutes. He said that he was sure they weren’t clouds, other aircra□, smoke, or weather bal oons.

A long series of sightings involving multiple witnesses, police officers, and several formations of objects began during the July 4 weekend in and around Portland, Oregon. C.J. Bogne started it when he and a carload of friends watched four disc-shaped objects streak past Mount Jefferson. □e objects made no noise and performed no maneuvers.

Don Metcalfe, an Oaks Park employee, watched a lone object at about

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one o’clock. Five minutes later police officer Kenneth A. McDowel near the Portland Police Station noticed that the pigeons around him were acting as if frightened. Overhead he saw ve objects, three heading east and two ying south. Although moving at high speed, he thought they might be oscil ating as they ew along.

Once again, I point out that this wil become an effect reported many

times, that is, animal reaction to the presence of the strange cra□. It suggests something that is unusual and it suggests something that is real.

Walter A. Lissy and Robert El is, patrolmen in Car 82, reported they watched three objects overhead. □ey might have been the same three that

McDowel reported.

Across the Columbia River in Vancouver, Washington, Sergeant John Sul ivan, Clarence McKay, and Fred Krives, al sheriff’s deputies, reported that twenty to thirty disc-shaped objects ew overhead.

Next three harbor patrolmen on the river near Portland reported six discs ying at high speed. Al said the objects were shiny, like chrome hubcaps, and al oscil ated as they ew, which sort of con rmed some of the earlier reports.

At four o’clock came more civilian reports. Typical of them was a woman

who said that she saw an object, shiny as a new dime, ipping around. It nal y ipped out of sight.

□ese sorts of sightings continued throughout the weekend in the northwest. People wanted to know what the ying saucers were and to that end, some began to post rewards for the “capture” of a ying saucer. By Sunday evening, there would be three thousand dol ars available to anyone who could provide pieces of a ying saucer or a solution about their identity.

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Within days, however, the offers began to expire.

Maury Island and Kenneth Arnold

Kenneth Arnold was not about to disappear from the ying saucer landscape. Ray Palmer, a former editor of Amazing Stories and later of Fate magazine, grew excited at the continuing reports of ying saucers. Palmer had taken a science ction magazine on the verge of folding and turned it into one with wide circulation in a matter of months. One of the stories, or more accurately, a series of stories, that created the increased circulation were the tales of Richard Shaver. Palmer had hinted that these were actual y true probably as a way to stir up even more interest in them. Shaver, in his rambling style, told of an underworld accessed through deep caves, of a war between the deros and teros, two “robot” societies, one good and one evil, and of their impact on the human race. Almost al that was bad in the world could be traced to the evil robots. By coincidence, the June 1947 issue of Amazing Stories was l ed with more of Shaver’s wild tales.

Palmer had suggested as he published the stories that these underground

entities, good and bad, did leave their caves occasional y, and when the ying saucers rst appeared over Washington state in June 1947, Palmer was convinced that this was the proof of the reality of Shaver’s tales. In fact, in an editorial published in October 1947, Palmer excitedly wrote, “A part of the now world-famous Shaver Mystery has now been proved!”

When the Arnold story broke in the national press, Palmer saw the opportunity to publicize his case and by doing that, validate the Shaver mystery. Palmer, as did so many others, wrote to Arnold, asking him to prepare a report for the magazine. Arnold didn’t want to do that, but he did send Palmer a copy of the report that he had prepared for the Army Air Forces.

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Magazine editor Ray Palmer published stories of UFO and alien encounters in his Fate magazine.

In a few days, Palmer wrote again, this time tel ing Arnold that he had a letter from a harbor patrol officer tel ing of a ying saucer sighting that had occurred three days before Arnold had seen anything. Palmer asked if Arnold would investigate and offered to pay Palmer two hundred dol ars which, in 1947, was quite a bit of money. Today it is quite a bit of money to pay someone who had no particular expertise and whose only quali cations seemed to be that he had also seen something strange and he lived in the area.

□e story, as it was told by Palmer and later by the harbor patrolmen,

was that Harold Dahl, his teenage son, and two other harbor patrolmen sighted six doughnut-shaped objects in the sky near them. Five of the cra□

seemed to be circling the sixth which was in some kind of trouble. As the lone object passed overhead, no more than 500 feet above them, it started

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“spewing a white type of very lightweight metal” and some kind of “dark-

type metal which looked similar to lava rock.” □e fal ing debris injured

Dahl’s son and kil ed their dog. When the object stopped dropping the metal, it took off, but not before Dahl managed to take a series of pictures.

In another, slightly different version of the story, reported in other sources, the sixth object landed, or crashed, on Maury Island in Puget Sound and then disintegrated, leaving behind some strange metal ic-like debris. Dahl col ected some of this material and then returned to Tacoma, Washington.

Now the case becomes a little confusing. According to what Dahl told

Arnold, and what Arnold reported later, he hadn’t said a word to anyone about the damaged object, the photographs, or the metal ic debris, but the next day a dark-suited stranger who seemed to know everything about the

sighting appeared to warn Dahl not to talk about it. Dahl ignored this warning and told his “supervisor” Fred Crisman about it. Crisman then went out to the beach and found some of the metal ic debris, or so he said.

□is aspect of the case becomes important to UFO history because this

is the rst report of a stranger who seems to know al and who dressed in dark clothing. Later, others would report that “Men in Black” had visited them a□er their UFO sightings. It was just one more rst in a long list that can be attributed to Arnold or Palmer or the guys from Maury Island.

Having interviewed Dahl, or rather having talked to him, Arnold and Dahl then headed to Crisman’s home to interview him. Crisman

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showed Arnold the debris that he had recovered, but Arnold was unimpressed. He

recognized it as lava and had begun to suspect the story was a hoax.

Arnold wasn't sure what he should do now. He cal ed Captain E. J.

Smith, the United Airlines pilot who had seen several disc-shaped objects during a ight on July 4. Arnold, as a private pilot, had respect for Smith, an airline pilot, and Smith eventual y joined Arnold in Tacoma. For those interested in such things, Arnold had Room 502 in the Winthrop Hotel, or so it has been reported in a variety of sources.

□e next day Crisman and Dahl visited Arnold at the hotel. Crisman now added a new detail. He told Arnold that when he had gone to the beach, he'd seen one of the doughnut-shaped ying saucers that seemed to be searching the bay for something. Crisman, who hadn't been on the boat

when the six objects had been seen, now dominated the conversation, as if he knew everything about it.

Arnold was less than impressed with al this and ordered breakfast in his hotel room. □ere wasn't much talk as they al ate and Arnold read some of the newspaper clippings he had brought with him, almost ignoring the other men. Later Arnold would say that one thing caught his attention. Flying saucers seen over Mountain Home, Idaho, had dropped or expel ed cinder

or lavalike ash. Here, suddenly, was another, independent report about a cra□, or several cra□, dropping the same kind of material that Dahl and then Crisman had talked about nding out on Maury Island.

Sometime that night, Arnold received a telephone cal from Ted Morel o,

a reporter for the United Press, who also seemed to know everything that had happened in Arnold's room during his discussions with Dahl

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and Crisman. Arnold had been about to hang up when Morel o made his claim.

Arnold gave the phone to Smith and he was told the entirety of what had

been going on in apparently private conversations. Fearing the room was bugged, Arnold and Smith began looking for hidden microphones, or as George Earley reported later, they “spent the next hour tearing that room apart, from the mattresses to the transoms.” ey found nothing.

e next morning, at the hotel, Dahl and Crisman arrived with some of

the debris and as Arnold and Smith were studying it, Crisman said they were to have breakfast with two of his crewmen. Dahl and Crisman introduced Arnold and Smith to a couple of tough-looking men who were

supposed to be the other crew members who had seen the object. Arnold

didn’t question them apparently assuming, according to Earley, that the crewmen would repeat the story as told by Dahl and Crisman.

ere was physical evidence from the objects, there were photographs

of them, but the story told by the men had some holes in it.

Dahl, or Crisman, also said that they had photographs of the objects.

Crisman had the lm, he said, which Dahl had given him. Once they saw

the lm, meaning Arnold and Smith and later Palmer, they al would know the truth. Pictures wouldn’t lie.

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Arnold was stil confused and unsure of what he needed to do. □ere was physical evidence from the objects, there were photographs of them, but the story told by the men had some holes in it. During the Army Air Forces investigation of his sighting, Arnold had been interviewed by an officer from the Fourth Air Force, Lieutenant Frank Brown. Arnold decided to cal him and let him take a turn at trying to gure al this out. Besides, he was trained for that sort of thing.

Ed Ruppelt, one-time chief of Project Blue Book, put it this way:

“For the Air Force the story started on July 31, 1947, when Lieutenant

Frank Brown, an intel igence agent at Hamilton AFB, California, received a long-distance phone cal . □e cal er was a man whom I’l cal Simpson

[which, of course, was Arnold, Ruppelt changed the name because of privacy considerations and the fact that the Air Force les were stil classi ed when he wrote his book] who had met Brown when Brown investigated an earlier UFO sighting…. He [Arnold] had just talked to two Tacoma Harbor patrolmen. One of them had seen six UFOs hover over his

patrol boat and spew out chunks of odd metal.”

Brown said that he would check with his superiors. If Arnold heard nothing from him in the next hour, he could assume that he, Brown, was on his way. Brown would be ying up from Hamilton Air Field in California.

Arnold and Smith waited around the hotel room, but didn’t know if Brown

was coming until he arrived.

Brown had le□ the base with another officer, Captain Wil iam Davidson,

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sometime in the a□ernoon. □ey ew a B-25 north and then met with Arnold at his hotel in Tacoma just before ve that evening. Arnold showed the two officers the fragments and both apparently recognized it as worthless slag. □ey immediately lost interest. Neither told Arnold this, apparently not wanting to embarrass him. Ruppelt later wrote, “Simpson

[Arnold] and his airline pilot friend [Smith] weren’t told about the hoax for one reason. As soon as it was discovered that they had been ‘taken,’

thoroughly, and were not a party to the hoax, no one wanted to embarrass them.”

But, of course, it’s not clear that either Arnold or Smith had been taken.

□ey were doing what they had been asked to do by Palmer, and they were

consulting the experts to determine what exactly had happened. Arnold had been suspicious from the rst, though he seemed to run hot and cold. One minute he would think it was a hoax and the next he wouldn’t be sure. He simply didn’t have the expertise to make an investigation, though he could ask a few questions. □e Army Air Forces officers probably should have said something to Arnold about their suspicions, but they were anxious to return to their home eld.

□ere is one other interesting aspect to this. According to George Earley in UFO (Issue 157, page 42), Arnold wanted to know what Army intel igence had learned about the ying objects. “Davidson drew a picture on a piece of paper, saying, ‘□is is a drawing of one of several photographs we consider to be authentic.’“

While that is interesting, it doesn’t improve our knowledge. But, according to what Earley wrote, Brown con rmed it saying, “It came from

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Phoenix, Arizona the other day. We have prints [taken by Wil iam Rhodes in July 1947] at Hamilton Field, but the original negatives were own to Washington, D.C.”

Davidson and Brown then le sometime around midnight, claiming

they had to return their aircra to California because of the upcoming Air Force Day celebration; they drove to McChord air eld where their B-25 was parked. ey spoke, brie y, with the intel igence officer there, Major George Sander, tel ing him that they believed Dahl and Crisman had made up the

tale and that they knew the story was a hoax. Sander would enter the story later.

At the air eld, they got ready to leave but picked up two “hitchhikers.”

Not long a er takeoff, the engine on the le wing caught re. Brown le the cockpit to assist the two passengers, the crew chief Woodrow D. Matthews and Sergeant Elmer L. Taff, with their parachutes. With them bailed out safely, Brown returned to the cockpit. George Earley suggested that the

pilots probably believed they could save the aircra . B-25s could be own with one engine working, though this one was not only stal ed, it was on re.

Taff later said that he saw the le wing burn off and smash into the tail.

e aircra spun out of control and neither of the pilots, Brown nor Davidson, got out. Tragical y, they were kil ed in the crash.

e story had suddenly turned deadly. e Army Air Forces, or maybe

more appropriately, the FBI, was brought in to investigate and learned that contrary to published reports at the time, there was no sabotage of the aircra and no one, or nothing, had shot it down. It was a tragic

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accident that focused more attention on the UFO sighting than it warranted, given the caliber of they witnesses.

Ruppelt in his book, □e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, reported,

“Both—(the two harbor patrolmen) [Dahl and Crisman] admitted that the

rock fragments had nothing to do with ying saucers. □e whole thing was a hoax. □ey had sent in the rock fragments to [Ray Palmer] stating that they could have been part of a ying saucer. He had said the rock came from a ying saucer because that’s what [Palmer] wanted him to say.”

□e Army Air Forces then found a solution to the case, and although two men had been kil ed investigating it, that had nothing to do with the UFO sighting. In fact, there had been no UFO sighting. □e men were not

prosecuted for inventing the story, though Ruppelt said that it had been considered by the military.

According to Jerry Clark, Arnold apparently never learned the whole truth about Maury Island. As late as 1977, Arnold was stil talking about the case when he appeared at UFO conferences. He also used it in an article he did write for the rst issue of Fate and in his book, written with Palmer, cal ed □e Coming of the Saucers. Of course, it might have been Palmer’s in uence that kept the story alive.

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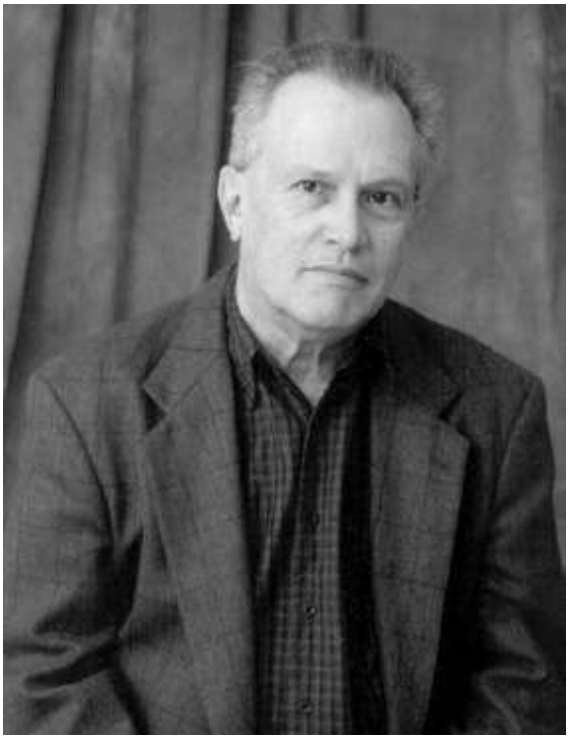

Author Jerry Clark has researched and published extensively on UFO

phenomena.

Arnold, however, wrote in his Fate article, as quoted by George Earley,

that Major Sander, when he looked at the fragments, said, “□at’s nothing but smelter slag. I’l tel you what it is. It’s just some kind of a hoax. □at’s true.’“

But there was another problem with the case, as laid out in the Project

Blue Book les and in the FBI documents that are a part of that le. Who was the mystery cal er? Who was the man in black that seemed to know everything about the case and was feeding that information to the news media? Who had been tel ing reporters everything that went on in Arnold’s room? Did he have any credibility?

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□e rst wire stories of the crash didn't mention the names of the officers kil ed, but the mystery cal er knew them anyway and used that knowledge to suggest that he was on the inside of the investigation. He was the one who original y suggested that the aircra□ had been shot down saying that a 20mm cannon had been used. He claimed it was because the officers carried some of the fragments picked up in the Maury Island area. He asked the

reporter why, if he had the names of the officers kil ed, he couldn't believe that the rest of his information was also correct?

It turned out that the mystery cal er did have the right names and the

Tacoma Times, and a few other newspapers including one in Chicago, carried the story that the B-25 had been shot down. Ted Lantz was one of the reporters, and because the mystery cal er had the names right, he believed him. When he learned a day or two later that both men had been

intel igence officers, he was convinced that the tale of the shoot-down was true.

But then the story takes another turn. □e mystery cal er, it turned out, was one of the two harbor patrolmen, though it is never clear which one. Of course, he knew what had gone on in Arnold's room because he had been

there, knew the names of the pilots kil ed because he had met them before they had taken off for California, and, of course, with that information veri ed, the newspapers printed the rest of his information believing it to be true.

□en, as so o□en happens in the world of the UFO, there was another

twist. Fred Crisman, it seems, according to John Keel, had written a letter to the editor of Amazing Stories, Ray Palmer, in 1946. He warned Palmer about continuing the story of deros and teros (you knew we had to get back to them eventual y) because he knew it was

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al true. He had seen them in the caves of Asia while he had been assigned to the Second Air Commando, an

aviation unit designed to use special tactics against the Japanese in the China-Burma-India □eater during the Second World War. Crisman wrote:

Sirs:

I ew my last combat mission on May 26 [1945] when I was shot up over Bassein and ditched my ship in Ramaree roads off Chedubs Island. I was missing ve days. I requested leave at Kashmere [sic]. I and Capt. (deleted by request) le□ Srinagar and went to Rudok then through the Khese pass to the northern foothil s of the Karakoram. We found what we were looking for. We knew what we were searching for.

For heaven's sake, drop the whole thing! You are playing with dynamite. My companion and I fought our way out of a cave with submachine guns. I have two 9" scars on my le□ arm that came from wounds given me in the cave when

I was 50 feet from a moving object of any kind and in perfect silence. □e muscles were nearly ripped out. How? I don't know. My friend has a hole the size of a dime in his right bicep. It was seared inside. How we don't know. But we both believe we know more about the Shaver Mystery than any other pair.

You can imagine my fright when I picked up my rst copy of Amazing Stories and see you splashing words about the subject.

What is interesting here is that Crisman knew about the Second Air Commando, which did serve in CBI □eater, and the place names al have

the ring of authenticity to them. Of course for a con to work, there must be some elements of truth in it, and these little nuggets put Crisman into the right place at the right time to tel his otherwise-outrageous story. Besides, Palmer now had another man tel ing

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“eyewitness” stories of the deros and the teros and he wasn’t about to chal enge what the man said, especial y with the circulation of the magazine soaring.

□e investigation, that included the FBI, resulted in both Crisman and

Dahl verifying that it had all been a hoax….

Palmer kept the Maury Island mystery alive as long as he could, but the

Army was more than annoyed about the deaths of two officers for what seemed to be nothing more important than a magazine article and some science ction stories. □e investigation, that included the FBI, resulted in both Crisman and Dahl verifying that it had al been a hoax that just had gotten out of hand. □ey had never meant it to be taken nearly as seriously as it was.

In fact, Crisman tried to blame Palmer, saying he only told Palmer what

Palmer wanted to hear. But it was Crisman who contacted Palmer with his

story of debris from a ying saucer and while it might be suggested that Palmer ignored the shaky nature of the information and evidence, it was Crisman who was there pushing his own agenda. Palmer knew Crisman from his earlier letter, which was published without a name attached. Palmer would later admit that Crisman was the author.

□e military investigation, or rather the documents in the Project Blue

Book les about the event, suggest that neither Dahl nor Crisman were

harbor patrolmen, but owned a salvage boat which they used to patrol Puget Sound searching for anything of value they could nd. Ruppelt suggested they had a couple of beat-up old boats they used in their salvage work.

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Others who investigated privately later said that the characterization of the boats was unfair. They didn't have a couple of boats, they had a single boat known as the North Queen which was only five years old and had been

renovated not long before the sighting.

But George Earley, in Issue 155, Vol. 24, No. 2, of UFO, explained this

more fully. He reported that in the U.S. Treasury Department's Merchant Vessels of the United States: 1947, there is a listing that said, "Dahl, Haldor, 1801 N. Union Avenue, Tacoma, Washington. 249586 North Queen."

Some researchers, seeing that name, Haldor Dahl, assumed that this was

Harold Dahl and the entry was a misprint. But it turns out there was a Haldor Dahl in Tacoma and he, with a partner, started Strom and Dahl Boat Builders which evolved into the Tacoma Boat Building Company which had

built a number of boats for the Navy during the Second World War. One of those was the USS Affray, and when the war ended, they bought the boat back from the Navy. They refitted it as a fishing boat and renamed it North Queen. Harold Dahl had never owned it, had nothing to do with it, and his boat, as described by Arnold, was much smaller and in a state of disrepair.

Palmer, of course, was not going to allow Arnold, Ruppelt, or the Army

Air Forces to destroy a good story. He claimed that Crisman wanted investigators to believe the story was a hoax. Crisman suggested that the Maury Island case could not be separated from the Shaver mystery and that flying saucers didn't come from outer space, but from the inner Earth.

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Maury Island proved that, at least in Crisman's mind, and if Palmer didn't believe it, he sure wanted to promote it. □e Shaver mystery had boosted the sales of his magazine by tens of thousands.

□e metal ic debris that everyone had been so concerned about was identi ed as slag and suggested that it bore a resemblance to similar material from a smelter near Tacoma. Although some suggested the slag had been radioactive, there is nothing in the FBI report to con rm this.

But to show that some things just can't be simple, Crisman pops up on the radar in the late 1960s as New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison began to investigate Clay Shaw and his relation to the Kennedy assassination. Crisman became one of the minor players when it was claimed that he was one of the three hobos seen in the railroad yards not long a□er the fatal shots had been red. Crisman was in the photograph of the hobos that has become part of the assassination legend.

So now we have moved from the possible crash of a spacecra□, to the

possible crash of a cra□ from the inner Earth, to a story of a disabled cra□

that dumped metal ic debris and maybe disintegrated, to the Kennedy assassination. But in al that, we have seen no evidence of anything extraordinary. □ere are only the tales told by Dahl and Crisman, and even those are undercut by retractions of the two men. □ey both told investigators that the story had started as a joke and that it had gotten out of hand.

Dahl's son, Charles, who had supposedly been injured by the saucer, was

located years a□er the event and said that it had never happened. Of Crisman, Charles Dahl said he was a smooth-talking con man and that the

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Maury Island incident was a hoax.

Earley wrote in UFO magazine (Issue 157, Vol. 24, No. 4) that no one

seemed to have searched for the medical records for Charles Dahl. Earley thought it would be a natural thing to do. If such records could be found, it would con rm part of the story, and while it was suggested by Palmer that he had photostats of those records, no one else ever saw them.

It should also be noted that no material with anything unusual about it

has ever surfaced, though Crisman had suggested in the 1960s he stil had some of it. □e photographs were supposedly taken by the military, through no one ever saw them. In the 1960s, Crisman suggested that he had made

duplicate negatives so that the military had not gotten them al , but, of course, the pictures never surfaced.

Final y, in Crisman's obituary, he mentioned his military service and suggested that he had received the Distinguished Service Cross. No record to support this has been found, though there are many databases that have

the names of al those who have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Of course, Crisman probably didn't write the obituary, though he certainly must have said something about the award to someone.

□e First Crashes

It was on the July 4 weekend that the stories of objects that slipped from the sky and fel to Earth rst appeared. In Circlevil e, Ohio, Jean Campbel , the daughter of a local farmer, was photographed holding up what her father had claimed might be one of the ying saucers. Sherman Campbel had found the remains of a radar target device that was attached to weather bal oons so that they could be more accurately tracked. Made of aluminum foil in a complicated box

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shape, the device would always have a at face aimed at the radar antenna. □e aluminum foil would re ect light just as wel so they could be tracked visual y. If the target was spinning, it could look like a disc. Campbel , of course, did not know this was cal ed a rawin radar target, nor did he know that rawin targets would enter the news prominently in the next few days, but he did know it was a weather bal oon and radar target.

Next came the story of Vernon Baird, a civilian pilot who was ying a P-

38 above thirty thousand feet when he spotted a formation of yo-yo-shaped objects behind him. As he watched, one broke formation, then got caught in the prop wash behind his plane and came apart. □e wreckage spiraled down, crashing in Montana's Tobacco Root Mountains.

□e next day, on July 8, the story was revealed as a hoax. Baird's boss, J.J.

Archer, said that they had been sitting around the hangar a□er listening to stories of the ying saucers and invented the tale.

In Tacoma, Washington, Gene Gamachi and I.W. Martenson said they

had watched a number of discs, some of which landed on the neighbor's roof. Of course by the time the reporters arrived the little men from inside and the objects were gone.

An elderly woman in Massachusetts said that she had seen a moon-sized

object, meaning, I suppose, something that looked to be the same size as the moon seen in the distance. Inside the cra□ was a slender male gure that she thought was wearing a Navy uniform.

Speculation continued to run high in the newspapers. □ere was some

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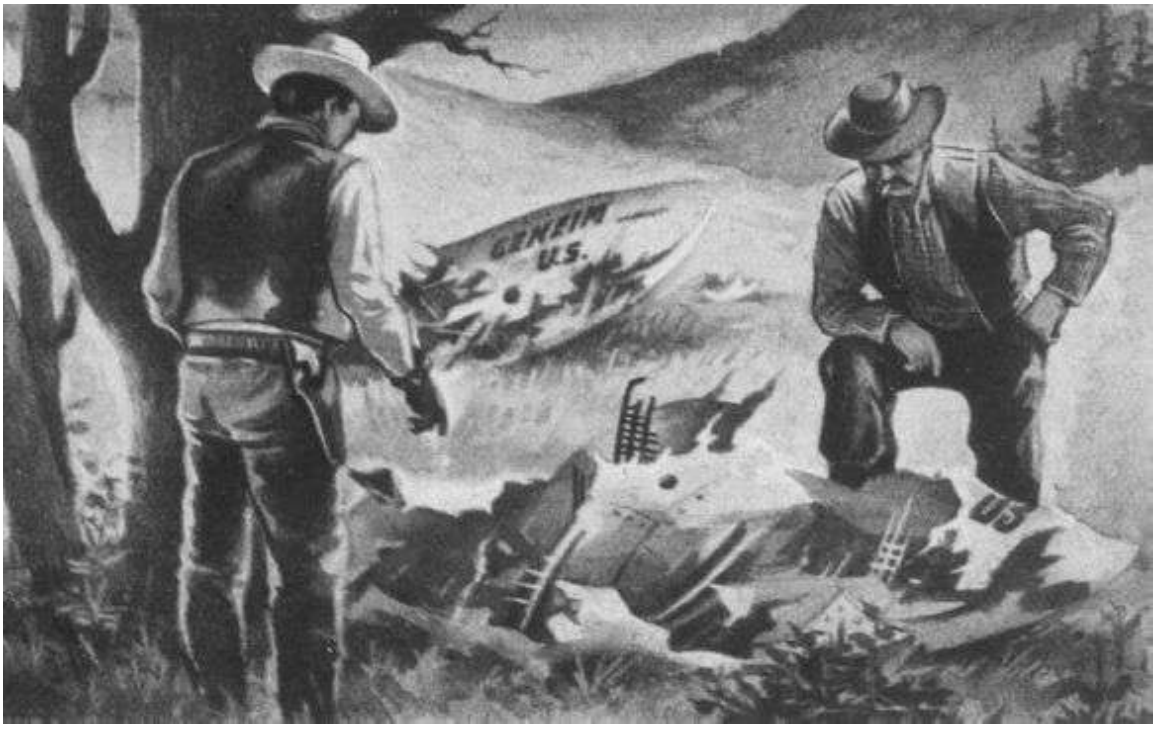
talk of interplanetary cra□, but most scientists, military officers, or

government officials who cared to comment suggested that there were more mundane explanations. □e real point is that the ying saucer stories had moved from the inside of the newspapers to the front pages. For several days the headlines had been about ying saucers.



□e End of the Reports

□en, suddenly, on July 8, there was an announcement that ended much of

the speculation. According to a press release issued by the 509th Bomb Group in Roswel , New Mexico, they had captured a ying saucer. Major Jesse A. Marcel, the air intel igence, had taken the remains of the crashed cra□ to Fort Worth Army Air Field for further inspection.

Ranchers discover debris near Roswell, New Mexico, in this artist depiction.

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□ere weren't many details given, but the story, for about three hours, caused a national sensation. □en Brigadier General Roger Ramey, who eventual y reached three-star rank (lieutenant general), told reporters that the saucer was nothing more than a weather bal oon. In fact, the debris displayed in his office, and shown in photographs published the next day on the front page of many newspapers, wasn't much different than what Sherman Campbel had found and identi ed a couple of days earlier. □e difference was that Campbel , a farmer, had been able to identify the material as parts of some kind of bal oon array, and that Marcel, an intel igence officer with the only nuclear strike force in the world, could not.

□e explanation was that the officers in Roswel had been swept up in the excitement and the hysteria of the time and that was why they failed to correctly identify the rather mundane debris.

About this same time, however, the number of reports was beginning to

decline. Or it might be more accurate to say the number of sightings reported in the newspapers began to decline. □ere had been excitement, especial y when there was talk of a ying saucer crash. But al those stories seemed to be hoaxes, wishful thinking, invention, or misidenti cation. Like the Great Airship of 1897, there were no fol ow-up stories.

□at might have been one of the reasons for the lack of interest in new

reports. □ey were basical y the same as those carried in earlier days and those that were different were quickly exposed as hoaxes.

A report from Shreveport, Louisiana, told of a disc that had been recovered by the Army. Photographs of it show an object about two or three feet in diameter that has some wires attached to it and looks to have a slight dome on top. It was, of course, a hoax, but one that would reach to J. Edgar Hoover before al was said and done. Hoover would scribble a note on a request for FBI investigative assistance for

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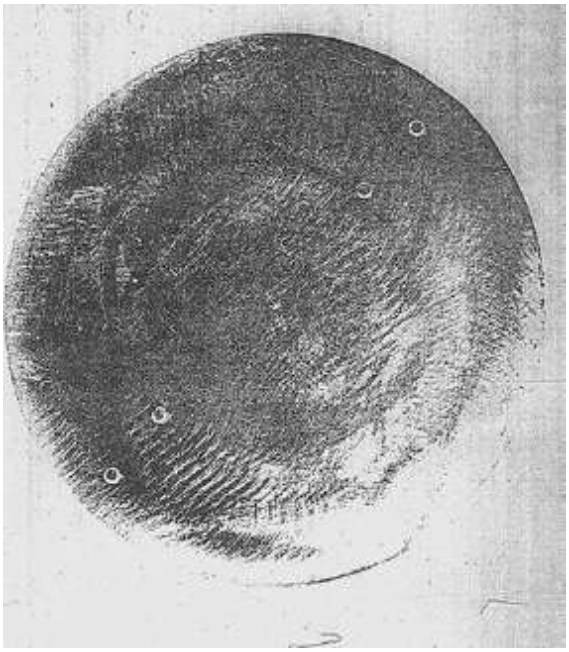
interviews of witnesses that came back to haunt UFO researchers. Today, we know that Hoover was referring

to the Shreveport case, though for years, this note was used as proof that the government knew more about ying saucers than they were tel ing.



Photograph of the Shreveport disc.

But this lack of interest did not infect the Pentagon. According to Ed Ruppelt in his 1956 book, □e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, “By the end of July 1947 the security lid was down tight. □e few members of the

press who did inquire about what the Air Force was doing got the same treatment that you would get today if you inquired about the number of thermonuclear weapons stockpiled in the U.S.’s atomic arsenal….”

□ere was further con rmation of this change of attitude. Where once

the military would be happy to speculate, and there was no trouble nding additional information, suddenly those sources were al gone.

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According to an Associated Press story that was reported in dozens of newspapers on July 9 and discussed later in more detail, the reports of ying saucers “whizzing”

through the sky fel off sharply as the Army and Navy began a concentrated effort to stop the rumors.

□e question that no one asked was why suddenly, on July 9, did the Army and Navy care what was in the newspapers regarding the ying saucers. It would seem that, suddenly, they had a reason to begin a campaign of suppression. And the only thing that had happened that could cause such a campaign was that they suddenly had an answer about the ying saucers

that they didn’t wish to share. Suddenly they knew the truth behind the

ying saucers and they didn’t want some smartass reporter getting too nosy and learning the truth.

And contrary to what they had told reporters, that answer had been found in Roswel .

The cover-up began on July 9, 1947, when newspapers across the country

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carried the United Press story that said, “Reports of ying saucers whizzing through the sky fel off sharply today as the Army and the Navy began a concentrated campaign to stop the rumors.”

While a number of explanations can be given for the sudden change in

the military attitude about UFOs, the simplest is that they wanted the discussions and speculations to end. Up to that point the newspapers had been l ed with stories about the ying saucers. □ere were theories about what they were, who had built them, what they could do, and what it al meant. No one seemed to care, thinking of this as just another manifestation of what the press had termed the “sil y season.”

But then, on July 9, it al changed.

Roswel

□is seems to be a direct response to the Roswel UFO crash. On July 8, 1947, Lieutenant Walter Haut, then the Public Information Officer (PIO) of the 509th Bomb Group stationed at the Roswel Army Air Field, announced

that officers of the group had found a ying saucer on a ranch somewhere in the area.

□e Roswel story, as it is usual y told, began in early July when ranch

manager Mack Brazel found a eld l ed with metal ic debris near Corona, New Mexico. Brazel showed a bit of the material to his closest neighbors, Floyd and Loretta Proctor, and wondered what he should do because he had a pasture l ed with it.

Loretta Proctor would later say that the piece he showed her was smal ,

about the size of a pencil, and extremely tough. She said that Floyd had attempted to whittle on it but couldn’t mark it. Brazel held a match

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to it but there was no sign of burning or scorching. She said that she didn't know what it might be.

Floyd thought that Brazel should take the material into Roswel because

the base there dealt with things in the sky. Others made a similar suggestion, and a ranch hand, Tommy Tyree, said that there was so much of the debris in one of the pastures that the sheep refused to cross it, meaning they had to be herded around the perimeter of this debris eld to get them to water.

Brazel, apparently, on Sunday drove into Roswel and went to the sheriff's office. □e sheriff, George Wilcox, suggested that he cal out to the base and let them know what he had found. Major Jesse Marcel, Sr., the Air Intel igence Officer, met Brazel at the sheriff's office. A□er examining the debris Marcel said that he didn't know what had been found.

Jesse Marcel

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Brazel led Marcel and the counterintel igence officer, Captain Sheridan

Cavitt, out to the ranch. □e drive, over the semi-plowed roads that sometimes seemed to disappear into the high desert, took over three hours.

□ey arrived sometime a□er dark.

□e next morning, Brazel saddled two horses. He rode one and Cavitt,

who was described as a “good ole West Texas boy,” rode the other. Marcel drove a military vehicle and fol owed along. □e terrain was the rol ing hil s of the high desert, but the ground was solid and his car made the drive easily.

Marcel would later say that the debris eld was three-quarters of a mile long and a couple of hundred feet wide. It was l ed with metal ic debris that stirred in the wind. □e fragments were lightweight, having the density of balsa wood, but incredibly tough. Marcel said that he found some parchment-like paper, and in keeping with what was becoming a tradition, used a match to test it. □e paper-like material would not burn.

□ey quickly l ed up one vehicle and Cavitt drove it back to the base.

Marcel, driving his car now, l ed it with more of the debris and then headed back to Roswel . He arrived sometime around midnight and stopped off at

his house to show his wife and son what he had discovered. Jesse Marcel, Jr., eleven at the time, found what he now describes as embossed symbols along a short, thin structure that he referred to as an I-beam.

Once at the base, Marcel and Cavitt reported what they had found to the

base commander, Colonel Wil iam C. “Butch” Blanchard. Blanchard,

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according to Haut, ordered him to write a press release that said they had found a ying saucer. Haut told UFO investigators in the 1990s that he didn't remember if Blanchard had dictated the release or had just given him the facts so that he could write it.

Haut said that he took the release to the four media outlets in Roswel , the two radio stations, and the two newspapers, and then he went home for lunch. Within a couple of hours, the world was interested in the ying saucer. Haut said that he received telephone cal s from al over the world and that he received letters with al sorts of exotic stamps.

Marcel was ordered to take wreckage to Fort Worth, Eighth Air Force

Headquarters, so that Brigadier Roger Ramey, the commanding officer, could examine it. Ramey, according to the newspaper accounts, identi ed the wreckage as part of a weather bal oon. He cal ed in Warrant Officer Irving Newton, who con rmed that the material on display in the office was part of a bal oon.

And the story died at that point for several decades.

A higher headquarters had overruled the opinion of a lower echelon organization. Pieces said to have been brought forward were shown and it was obvious they were from a bal oon. □e rancher who found it lived on a ranch with no telephone, but he was in Roswel , on the military base. □e Intel igence Officer was not in Roswel and couldn't be interviewed. □e sheriff told al who cal ed him to talk to those out at the base. □ere was simply nowhere for a reporter to go to get any additional information.

Although it was mentioned in a few books and articles, the facts were

lost. Frank Edwards, in his Flying Saucers—Serious Business, talked about a

pie plate and a kite. He did say that it happened near Roswel —which is about the only fact he managed to get right.

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An Army Air Forces Opinion

On July 7, 1947, Captain Tom Brown, described as a member of the Army

Air Forces Public Affairs Office, said that the AAF had decided there was

“something to” al the ying saucer reports. Brown’s opinion, which must be considered the Army Air Forces opinion because of who he was and the position he held, was expanded in other stories. He told a reporter that the

“tales of at round objects zipping thru [sic] the sky are too widespread to be groundless.” He said that a number of competent airmen, as wel as others, had reported them.

He said that the AAF had been checking on these stories for ten days

and “stil haven’t the slightest idea what these things can be.”

Brown said, “We don’t believe anyone in this country or outside this country has developed a guided missile that wil go 1,200 miles an hour, as some reports have indicated.”

□is is tel ing us that while the Army Air Forces was interested in the

ying saucer reports, and they were attempting to nd out what was behind the reports, they didn’t know. □e speculation was running the gambit from something from another world to spots in front of the eyes. Nearly al opinions were printed somewhere.

□e Rhodes Photograph

Wil iam A. Rhodes, in July 1947, was a self-employed scientist living in Phoenix who claimed he had taken what might be considered the rst good

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photographs of one of the ying saucers. Rhodes would tel reporters and various government investigators, including those from the FBI and the Army's Counterintel igence Corps, that he had been on his way to his workshop at the rear of his house when he heard a distinctive "whoosh" that he believed to be from a P-80 "Shooting Star" ghter jet (which was the fastest airplane of that particular moment). He grabbed his camera from the workshop bench and hurried to a smal mound in his backyard. He estimated that the object was circling in the east about a thousand feet in the air.

Rhodes sighted along the side of his camera, according to what he would

later tel a newspaper reporter, Robert C. Hanika, and took his rst photograph. He advanced the lm and then hesitated, thinking that he would wait for the object to get closer. □en, worried that it would disappear without coming closer, snapped the second picture, nishing the rol and his ability to record the event.

Rhodes' story, along with the pictures, appeared in the Phoenix newspaper □e Arizona Republic on July 9. In that article Hanika wrote,

"Men long experienced in aircra□ recognition studied both the print and the negative from which they were made and declined to make a guess on what

the ying object might be."

He also wrote, "□e marked interest Rhodes has for al aircra□ has led

most persons who have been in contact with other observers of the ' ying discs' to believe the photographs are the rst authentic photographs of the missiles, since Rhodes easily can identify practical y any aircra□."

Rhodes said that the object appeared to be el iptical in shape and to have a diameter of twenty to thirty feet. It appeared to be at ve thousand feet when rst seen and was traveling, according to Rhodes,

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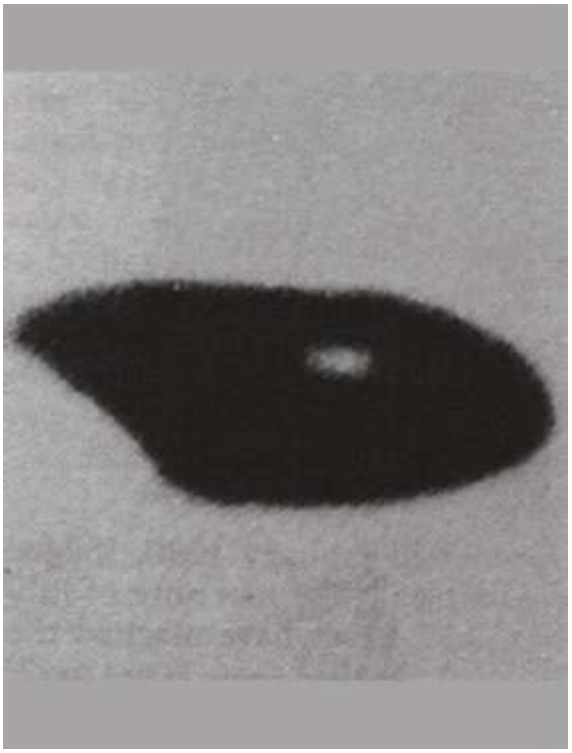
at four hundred to six hundred miles per hour. It was gray, which tended to blend with the gray overcast background of the sky.



□e object had, according to Rhodes and a con dential report from the

Project Blue Book les, “what appeared to be a cockpit canopy in the center which extended toward the back and beneath the object. □e cockpit did not protrude from the surface but was clearly visible with the naked eye.”

□ere were no propel ers or landing gear, I but there did seem to be trails of turbulent air I behind the trailing points of the object. Speculation was that there were jet engines of some kind located there. □e cra□ moved silently, although Rhodes had said that a jetlike roar was what cal ed his attention to it.

□e news stories apparently alerted the military to Rhodes’ sighting.

Various investigations were launched. On July 14, 1947, Lynn C. Aldrich, a special agent for the Army’s counterintel igence corps (CIC) in a memo for the record available in the Project Blue Book les wrote,

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“On 8 July 1947, this Agent obtained pictures of unidenti able objects … from the managing editor of the Arizona Republic newspaper. e pictures were taken by Mr.

Wil iam A. Rhodes … [of] Phoenix, Arizona, at sunset, on 7 July 1947.”

e overall shape of the UFO can be clearly seen in this photo by William Rhodes, though details are unclear.

en, on August 29, according to a “Memorandum for the Officer in Charge,” George Fugate, Jr., a special agent of the CIC and stationed at Fourth Air Force Headquarters, interviewed Rhodes in person. Fugate was

accompanied by Special Agent Brower of the Phoenix FBI Office. is interview is important because of some of the confusion about location of the negatives and prints of the photographs that would develop later.

During the interview, Rhodes again told the story, suggesting that he thought, at rst, it might have been the Navy’s “Flying Flapjack” which had been featured on the May 1947 cover of Mechanix Il ustrated. He rejected the idea because he saw no propel ers or landing gear. Later research by various investigators, both military and civilian, shows that the Navy built a single “Flapjack” and that it never ew outside the Bridgeport, Connecticut, area.

At the end of Fugate’s report, he wrote, “Mr. Rhodes stated that he developed the negatives himself. He stil had the negative of the rst photograph … but he could not nd the negative for the second

photograph.”

On February 19, 1948, Lewis C. Gust, the chief Technical Project Officer, Intel igence Department (though the Project Blue Book les fail to identify the man or his organization beyond that), wrote what might be considered a preliminary report on the analysis of the photographs. “It is concluded that the image is of true photographic

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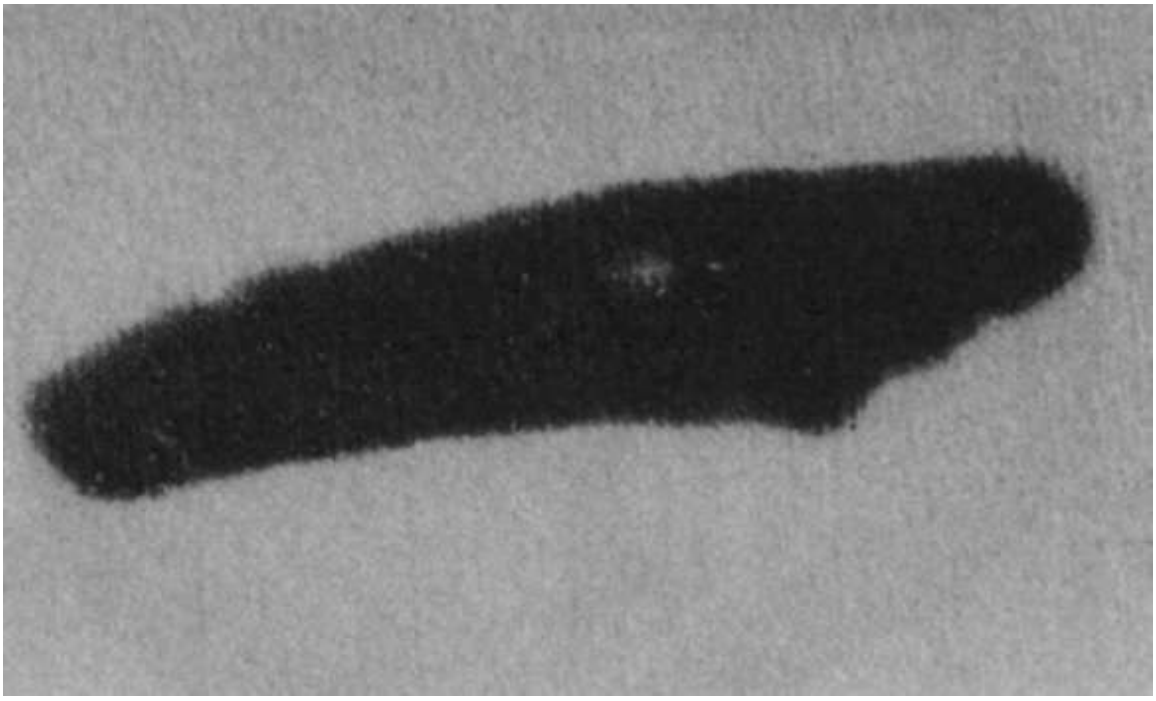
nature, and is not due to imperfections in the emulsion, or lack of development in the section in question. □e image exhibits a ‘tail’ indicating the proper type of distortion due to the type of shutter used, the speed of the object and the xed speed of the shutter. □is trailing off conforms to the general information given in the report.”



In this photo by Rhodes, the profile of the mysterious cra□ is apparent.

On May 11, 1948, Rhodes was again interviewed, but this time by high-

ranking people. Lieutenant Colonel James C. Beam, who worked with the

chief of intel igence at Wright Field, Colonel Howard McCoy, and Alfred C.

Loedding, who was a civilian employee at AMC and part of Project Sign, traveled to Phoenix. □ey wrote, “Although Mr. Rhodes is currently employed as a piano player in a nightclub, his primary interest is in a smal but quite complete laboratory behind his home.

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According to his business card, this laboratory is cal ed ‘Panoramic Research Laboratory’ and Mr.

Rhodes is referred to as the ‘Chief of Staff.’ Mr. Rhodes appeared to be completely sincere and apparently is quite interested in scienti c experiments.”

In fact, that same Grudge Report noted, “In subsequent correspondence

to the reporter of this incident, the observer refers to himself as Chief of Staff of Panoramic Research Laboratory, the letterhead of which lists photography among its specialties. Yet, the negative was carelessly cut and faultily developed. It is covered with streaks and over a period of six months has faded very noticeably.”

□e AMC opinion in the Project Grudge report, which fol owed Langmuir’s statement about the possibility of windblown debris, was, “In view of the apparent character of the witness, the conclusion of Dr.

Langmuir [that the photographs be discounted as paper swept up by the wind] seems entirely probably [sic].”

On June 5, 1952, now nearly ve years a□er the pictures were taken, and

before the massive publicity about UFOs was about to burst on the public consciousness, Colonel Arno H. Luehman, Deputy Director of Public Information, wrote about “Declassifying Photographs of Unidenti ed Flying Objects.” In the rst paragraph of his letter, he wrote, “□is office understands that two photographs were taken by Mr. Wil iam A. Rhodes of

Phoenix, Arizona, and that these photographs were turned over to Fourth

Air Force Intel igence in July of 1947. □is office has been contacted by Mr.

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Rhodes who is requesting return of his original negatives.”

□e letter continued, “□e two photographs were copied by the

Photographic Records and Services Division of the Air Adjutant General’s Office at this headquarters and are in a con dential le of Unidenti ed Missiles as A-34921AC and 34921AC.”

But the important part of the document comes at the end. Aldrich wrote,

“On the morning of August 30, 1947, when Mr. Rhodes cal ed at the Phoenix office [of the FBI] to deliver the negatives, they were accepted only a□er he was advised that they were being given to Mr. FUGATE, a representative of the Army Air Force Intel igence, United States Army, and that there was little, if any, chance of his getting the negatives back. Mr.

Rhodes turned them over to this office with the ful understanding that they were being given to the Army and that he would not get them back.”

On July 14, 1952, in stil another letter, we learn that the pictures and negatives were turned over to Air Force intel igence representatives at Hamilton Field on August 30, 1947. In that document, they are attempting to trace the course of the pictures from Rhodes to the FBI to Army intel igence. What this suggests is that the Air Force wasn’t sure of where the pictures and negatives were. □ey were attempting to shi□ the blame to others for the apparent loss of those pictures, including Rhodes himself.

□at same July 14 document, written by Gilbert R. Levy, noted, “A background investigation was run on Rhodes, by OSI, for the bene t of AMC, which re ected Rhodes had created the name PANORAMIC

RESEARCH LABORATORY, to impress people with his importance. He was

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reported to be a musician by trade, but had no steady job. Neighbors considered him to be an excel ent neighbor, who caused no trouble, but judged him to be emotional y high-strung, egotistical, and a genius in fundamentals of radio. He conducts no business through his ‘Laboratory,’

but reportedly devotes al his time to research.”

□is means, simply, Rhodes had surrendered his photographs and

negatives to the government and although they hint that Rhodes knew where they were, that simply isn’t borne out in the documents. Even the Air Force officers didn’t know where the photographs were. □at was why there were letters written from one office to another.

□ere was never a clear conclusion to the identity of the object photographed by Rhodes. □e Air Force, apparently unnerved by the self-employed Rhodes and his lack of visible means of support, at least to them, concluded the case as a hoax. □ey simply didn’t like Rhodes and were apparently unaware that he had held several patents for his inventions and was apparently receiving some sort of compensation for them.

□e Secrecy Begins

A□er the story of the crash at Roswel , a□er the reports from the airline crew, a□er the series of sightings in Oregon, and a□er the Rhodes photographs, the government had had enough. □at seems to be the motivation behind the sudden attempts to suppress the stories of ying saucers that was reported on July 9. □e question becomes, just what was

happening at the highest levels of the government?

According to Dr. Michael Swords, who has attempted to answer this question, those at “topside,” meaning those higher in the military chain of command, were confused. Edward Ruppelt, who was one-time chief of Project Blue Book, said they were more than confused, they were scared.

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□ey didn't seem to have a handle on what was happening around them and

they had no answers for the questions the politicians were asking them.

Even as the number of sighting reports was reaching a peak, the government was attempting to learn more. An FBI document from the time

states, "In passing, General Schulgen [Brigadier General George F. Schulgen, Chief of the Requirements Intel igence Branch of Army Air Force Intel igence] stated that an Air Force pilot who believed that he saw one of these objects was thoroughly interrogated by General Schulgen and scientists, as wel as a psychologist, and the pilot was adamant in his claim that he saw a ying disc."

On July 9, the day the Army and Navy began a "campaign to stop the

rumors," General Schulgen requested that FBI special agent S.W. Reynolds ask for FBI assistance in solving the problem of ying discs. Colonel L. R.

Forney, of what would later become the Defense Intel igence Agency, told Reynolds that the discs were not Army or Navy vehicles. □at meant they

could be Soviet, or from another country that had the hidden technical capability to create them but who were not hostile, or alien cra□ from another world.

Confusion inside the military continued. Panic, according to Ruppelt, had swept through the hal s of the Pentagon and the buildings at Wright Field. □e theory that the ying discs might be some sort of new Soviet

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weapon, developed from captured German documents and by captured German scientists and engineers, dominated the thinking.

□e Roswell UFO Museum in New Mexico.

It also became clear to those investigating ying saucers in late July that there was a strange silence from the men at the very top of the government, both military officers and civilian leaders. At the beginning of July, again according to Ruppelt and others, there was a state of near panic. But, by the end of the month, there was stil nothing from the topside. □ose inside the intel igence community not privy to al the information circulating at the very highest levels could draw but a single conclusion, at least to the thinking of those reviewing the records years later. If those at the top were no longer interested in the ying discs, then they must know al about them, including where they came from, and that they posed no security risk to the United States. Further investigation would be a waste of time because the answers were al known, given that line of reasoning.

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Swords, writing □e Summer of 1947: UFOs and the U.S. Government at

the Beginning, noted, "□e evidence for this can be found in documents

released through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the FBI. In a page probably attached to, and certainly related to, an FBI copy of an Air Force document dated July 30, 1947, a ranking USAF intel igence officer states unambiguously: 'Lack of topside inquiries, when compared to the prompt and demanding inquiries that have originated topside upon former

events [such as the Swedish ghost rockets of 1946], give more than ordinary weight to the possibility that this is a domestic project, about which the president, etc. know."

Confusion inside the military continued. Panic … had swept through

the halls of the Pentagon and the buildings at Wright Field.

At the same time, General Schulgen, trying to nd out what was happening, was unhappy with the lack of information in his office and the results of his inquiries. He decided to make a direct request to the Air Materiel Command where the labs and resources to identify the saucers were housed. Accompanying the request was the rst "Estimate of the Situation." Although the study contained the speci cs of sixteen cases, the body of the report mentions eighteen different reports of ying saucers.

□ese were the best sightings that had been reported as early as May 17, 1947, and as late as July 12. Five of the cases involved military pilots, including a Maxwel Field sighting by four pilots on June 28. Six of them involved civilian pilots, including the July 4 sighting near Emmett, Idaho, made by a Captain E. J. Smith and his United Airlines crew and most of the passengers.

□e estimate contained the conclusions based on the information used

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to prepare it. It seemed that the officers did not think the ying saucers were much of a mystery. □ey believed they were mechanical aerial objects. □ey just didn't know whose, but based on the apparent lack of concern from the top, they believed that the discs had to be a highly classi ed U.S. project. No other conclusion made sense to them.

□e response from Twining's AMC staff probably surprised those at those lower levels, including Schulgen. □ose below believed that the AMC

would know al about the ying discs, yet in his response, Twining was

tel ing them that the phenomenon was something "real and not visionary or ctitious." Not only that, Twining was tel ing them that his command didn't know what the ying discs were and that they should be investigated.

□at had to be confusing. If the ying discs were a U.S. project, then the last thing anyone would have wanted would be an official investigation into them. Any investigation would be a threat to the security of the project and since very few, apparently, were privy to that information, it was clearly highly classi ed. To end such an investigation one of those on the inside of the secret would have to drop a hint to someone on the outside. If, for example, it was such a secret project that General Twining and the AMC

were outside the loop, then another general, on the inside, could cal Twining to tel him to drop the investigation. He wouldn't have to spil any details of the project, only tel Twining that it was something he didn't need to worry about because it was being covered by someone else. Twining would then end his inquiries, secure in the knowledge that the solution to the mystery was already known to someone else.

□at, however, didn't happen. Instead, Twining suggested that a priority

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project, with a rating of 2A, be created to investigate the ying saucers. He wanted information found and reported to his office. □e priority level of the new project also suggested that Twining wanted his answers quickly.

At that point it seems that the gathering of intel igence data by the Army Air Forces as conducted by the military in 1947 was disorganized, inefficient, and confused. A review of the documents showed that interviews conducted with key witnesses, such as Kenneth Arnold, were not completed until weeks a□er their sightings, and then not al the important questions were asked. To make it worse, the critical corroboration of the Arnold sighting by Fred Johnson was overlooked. In the “Estimate” sent up by General Schulgen, the dates of some reports are wrong, suggesting that only a super cial investigation had been conducted. It was clear that a coordinated effort to gather data had not been attempted, and the “not stated” entries in many of the cases showed that no one cared enough to re-interview witnesses to get proper answers.

Swords, commenting on this rst estimate, wrote, “What explains this con dent display of mediocrity? Although we are apparently not dealing

with genius here, neither should we assume complete stupidity. □is report was not put together with any greater intensity because the authors did not feel that it was necessary. □ey did not think that UFOs were any great mystery. It was obvious to them that UFOs were mechanical, aerial devices.

Whose devices was stil up in the air (so to speak), but the indications were fairly clear: despite assurances to the contrary, they must be our own. ‘Lack of topside inquiries’ made this the only reasonable conclusion in their eyes.”

□ese men, who hadn’t exactly shined during their investigation, had no

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burning passion to nd the answers because they were convinced the answers already existed at the very top. □eir estimate, according to Swords, was little more than a plea asking, “Can we please quit this nonsense.”

Swords said that he believes the report was not forwarded to Twining until late August or early September of that year. Twining’s response came on September 24, 1947. According to the documentation reviewed by Swords, the people at Wright Field and the Aircra□ Laboratory Engineering Division (Wright Field’s secret aeronautical engineering facility) added nothing to the discussion “except a sales pitch for a new project.” □at is a key point. □ey merely reviewed what Schulgen had sent to them and nothing more.

□e original study had concluded that the UFOs were probably our own

and we should quit chasing them. Logic dictated that Twining and the others would say exactly that. Quit chasing them. Instead, they are told that the UFOs aren’t ours and, not only to keep the investigation going, but there would be a new project under a new banner with a high priority attached to it. □at was not an expected result.

□is, then, was the beginning of Project Sign. According to Ed Ruppelt,

the 2A priority was the second highest possible. Only the top people at ATIC [Air Technical Intel igence Center] were assigned to the new project.

□is was a serious project designed to obtain speci c answers to speci c questions.

□e original study had concluded that the UFOs were probably our own and we should quit chasing them.

□e mission of Project Sign, then, was to determine the nature of the ying saucers. According to Ruppelt, there were two schools of thought. One believed that the Soviets, using their captured German

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scientists, had developed the ying discs. ATIC technical analysts searched for data on the German projects in captured documents in the United States, and intel igence officers in Germany were doing the same there.

It became clear, however, that the second school of thought, that is, that the UFOs were not manufactured on Earth, began to take hold. No evidence was found that the Soviets had made some sort of technological breakthrough. Even if they had, it seemed unlikely that they would be ying their new cra over the United States. If one crashed, they would have just handed the technological breakthrough to our government.

e initial panic that had bubbled through the Pentagon during the summer of 1947 began to subside. Twining's suggestion for a project was accepted and implemented. at proved that the objects, whatever they were, did not belong to the United States. According to Ruppelt, by the end of 1947, the situation at ATIC had slipped back into routine.

ere were, however, some interesting documents prepared. In a Dra of

Col ection Memorandum, General Schgulen outlined what those working on Project Sign would be doing. It was a listing of intel igence data that would be valuable not only in determining what the ying discs were, but also in discovering how they operated. e "Col ection Memorandum"

outlined the "essential elements of intel igence" or "the current intel igence requirements in the eld of ying saucer-type aircra." at is, it was tel ing the eld offices what information was desired by those at the top. It was a way of coordinating the col ection of the information to ensure that everyone was operating in the same fashion. It real y didn't matter here if the objects were manufactured on Earth or made elsewhere.

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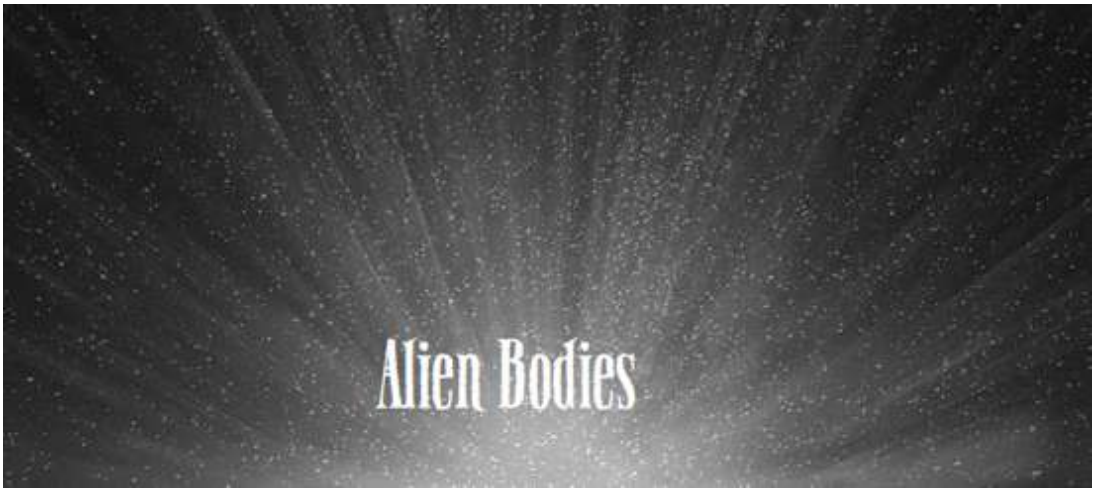
Project Sign was beginning to work in a coordinated fashion, col ecting

information to be forwarded to ATIC. □e era of panic and confusion was

ending by the late summer of 1947. □e reason for that is probably no more complex than the passing of time. □e pressure from the top for immediate answers had passed. □e generals and their top civilian advisors stil needed the answers, but as the days mounted, it became clear that nothing new was

going to happen. □ere wasn't going to be an invasion from anywhere. □ey could relax slightly.



From the moment that there were reports of strange cra□ in the sky, there were reports of the creatures who piloted them and stories of the bodies of aliens kil ed in crashes. Some of these cases are little more than modern attempts to force ancient myths into an alien framework. Others are simply hoaxes told to amuse fel ows or see a name in the newspaper. But a few are of real events that have been concealed behind a layer of government secrecy that is nearly impossible to penetrate.

Kil ed by Humans

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As noted earlier, a tale from France, as described by Brad Steiger and others, suggests alien communication, and while not al versions of the story claim there were bodies, al versions do suggest there had been creatures. In other words, in a few of the stories the aliens were kil ed by humans, a□er some sort of confrontation.

□e stories from the 1897 Great Airship sightings also suggest alien, meaning unearthly, creatures. □e body of the Martian al eged to have been kil ed when his cra□ crashed in Aurora, Texas, never existed. As noted earlier, researchers beginning in the 1970s attempted to verify the story, attempted to nd the grave, and attempted to nd the wreckage. To this point, they have not been successful and if there is a conspiracy involved here, it is to keep the story alive. Some might suggest it is to keep it alive because it diverts attention from the real cases that have been found since 1897.

In the late 1930s, at least according to more modern sources, Cordel Hul , who was Secretary of State under Franklin Roosevelt, saw the bodies of alien creatures kept in glass specimen jars. According to the Center for UFO

Studies, in early December 1999 they received a letter dated November 29, 1999, from the daughter of the Reverend Turner Hamilton Holt. In it she wrote:

Today I want to share some knowledge that has been, by request, kept secret in our family since sometime in World War II. □is concerns something my father was shown by his cousin Cordel Hul , the Secretary of State under Franklin Roosevelt. Sumner Wel s was his Under-Secretary of State. Hul was a cousin to my father. My father was on some kind of advising committee, and made several trips to Washington, D.C., in that capacity.

My father, who was young, bril iant, and sound of mind, tel s this story to us because he didn’t want the information to be lost. One day when my father was in D.C., with Cordel , Cordel swore him to secrecy and took him to a sub-basement in the U.S. Capitol building,

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and showed him an amazing sight: (1) Four large glass jars holding 4 creatures unknown to my father or Cordel

[and], (2) A wrecked round cra□ of some kind nearby.

My father wanted my sister and I to make this information known long a□er he and Cordel were dead, because he felt it was a very important bit of information. We have researched your group and feel it is the most reliable group in the country. We hope that you wil research and search this information.

Please don't disregard this because what I have written is true. □e jars with creatures in formaldehyde and the wrecked cra□ are somewhere!

Cordel said they were afraid they would start a panic if the public found out about it.

Sincerely,

Lucile Andrew

Mark Rodeghier, the scienti c director of CUFOS, passed the letter along to Wil iam E. Jones and Eloise G. Watkins, two UFO researchers who live in Ohio. Watkins made several telephone cal s to the woman who had

signed the letter and a couple of trips to Ashland, Ohio, where she lived.

According to the article that appeared in the winter 2001–2002 issue of

the International UFO Reporter published by CUFOS, Jones and Watkins wrote that they had interviewed Andrew on February 12, 2000, at her home.

She said that she had been told the story when she was much younger and

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added that Holt had told another of his daughters. In what is one of those bizarre coincidences that dot the UFO landscape, it turned out that the daughter, Al ene, is the mother of Watkins. Watkins, of course, knew it was her aunt; she just had never heard the UFO story from her.

□is is a mock-up of an alien body based upon reports that government

scientists have autopsied aliens in the past.

On April 3, 2000, Jones and Watkins met both sisters, Lucile and Al ene, for a combined interview. □ey remembered the story independently, but Al ene was able to add little detail to the report.

Jones and Watkins attempted to verify as much of the story as they could. Hul le□ a huge written record of his life, but in the searches of his personal papers, as wel as his official documents, they were unable to verify the account. □ey did learn that at one time there had

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been a sub-basement to the capitol building, but al that did was con rm that there had been a sub-basement to the building.

□ey also learned that Hul and Holt were from the same smal area of

Kentucky and that they had known each other. In fact, it seemed that they were related, though they were little more than distant cousins. As for the story of the bodies in glass tubes in the basement, they were unable to corroborate that part of the story.

□e Cape Girardeau Recovery

Charlette Mann wrote to Ray Fowler, a longtime and wel -trusted UFO

researcher, about an event that seemed to be about a UFO crash. Fowler, who knew of the work of Len String eld and his interest in what he would later cal crash/retrievals, sent a copy on to him.

“A□er grandfather returned that night, he explained what he had seen

to grandmother, my father, Guy, and Uncle Wayne, but that they were

never to speak of it again….”

In that letter Mann claimed her grandfather, a minister, received a late-night telephone cal asking him to go to the scene of an aircra□ accident.

□ere were hints of something extraordinary, but the letter from Mann was somewhat confusing. □ere was, however, enough detail in that original letter that String eld cal ed her to ask for more detail. He convinced her to rewrite her letter into a more structured report, which he published in his UFO Crash/Retrievals: □e Inner Sanctumin in July 1991.

According to Mann, her grandfather, Reverend Wil iam Huffman, was

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“born in August 1888 and he grew up in Missouri. He attended col ege in

Bolivar and a□er graduation, he went to a seminary. He was an ordained Baptist minister … he was a quiet man who was wel respected.”

He was also a wel -educated man for the times and he was a minister,

which suggests he was also an honest man. He died before tel ing Mann about the case, so the information came to her from her grandmother, known by everyone as Floy.

In her May 6, 1991 letter to String eld, she provided details that she had heard from her grandmother. She wrote:

It happened in the Spring of 1941. About 9 to 9:30 one evening, granddad got a telephone cal from the police department, saying they had received reports that a plane had crashed outside of town and would he go in case someone needed him. Of course he said yes. A car was sent to get him, but my grandmother said it wasn’t a police car.

A□er grandfather returned that night, he explained what he had seen to grandmother, my father, Guy, and Uncle Wayne, but that they were never to speak of it again….

He said they drove out of town 13–15 miles or so, then parked the cars on the side of the road and had to walk ¼ of a mile or so into a eld where he could see re burning.

Grandfather said it wasn’t an airplane or like any cra□ he’d ever seen. It was broken and scattered al around, but one large piece was stil together and it appeared to have a rounded shape with no edges or seams. It had a very shiny metal ic nish. You could see inside one section and see what looked like a metal chair with a panel with many dials and gauges—none familiar looking to him. He said that when he got there, men were already si□ing through things.

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□ere were some police officers, plain clothes people and military men. □ere were three bodies not human, that had been taken from the wreckage and laid on the ground. Grandfather said prayers over them so he got a close look but didn't touch them. He didn't know what had kil ed them because they didn't appear to have any injuries and they weren't burnt. It was hard for him to tel if they had on suits or if it was their skin but they were covered head to foot in what looked like wrinkled aluminum foil. He could see no hair on the bodies and they had no ears. □ey were smal framed like a child about 4 feet tal , but had larger heads and longer arms. □ey had very large oval shaped eyes, no noses just holes and no lips just smal slits for mouths. □ere were several people with cameras taking pictures of everything. Two of the plain clothes men picked up one of the little men, held it under its arms. A picture was taken. □at was the picture I later saw. □en, one of the military officers talked to granddad and told him he was not to talk about or repeat anything that had taken place for security reasons and so as not to alarm people. Granddad returned home, told his family. □at was al . About two weeks a□er it happened, he came home with a picture of the two men holding the little man.

A□er my grandfather died, my Dad kept the picture and was very interested in UFO info. □en when I was 10 or 11, a close friend of my Dad's asked if he could borrow it to show to his folks so Dad let him have it and never got it back.

String eld wondered about the picture. □is would be a wonderful piece

of evidence but, as has happened in al similar stories, the picture has disappeared. It was loaned to another who failed to return it.

String eld knew of a similar picture that had been published in various

UFO magazines. In this photograph, two military-looking men are holding

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the long arms of an al eged alien creature. It is clearly a monkey and the picture an obvious and wel -known hoax.

Mann, in her May 6, 1991, letter, provided a lengthy description of the

photograph she had seen. She wrote:

My recol ection from what I saw in the picture was a smal man about 4 feet tal with a large head and long arms. He was thin and no bone structure was apparent; kind of so□ looking. He had no hair on his head or body with large, oval, slightly slanted eyes but not like oriental from le□ to right, more up and down. He had no ears at al and nose like ours. His mouth was as if you had just cut a smal straight line where it should have been. His skin or suit looked like crinkled-up tin foil and it covered al of him…. I believe he had three ngers, al quite long, but I can't be sure on this.

"He had no hair on his head or body with large, oval, slightly slanted

eyes but not like oriental from le□ to right, more up and down."

String eld was able to nd a copy of the picture he remembered and sent

it on to Mann. She replied, "It is nothing like what I saw. Your picture showed men in overcoats while in my picture, the man had no coats [sic]….

Your picture shows two women; mine none. □e alien in yours looks like a

tiny dol , much smal er and shorter than mine."

Mann has given interviews to several other researchers and some of the

details of her story have expanded. For example, in a 2008 interview she said that when her grandfather arrived at the scene of the wreck, two of the alien creatures were dead, but the third was stil alive. She

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said that it, or he, or possibly even she, died while her grandfather was praying over it. He then moved on to the other two to offer prayers for them.

She also said that the symbols he had seen inside the cra “looked similar to hieroglyphics.”

ere is some corroboration. In what might be considered a not very persuasive bit of evidence, Clarance R. Schade, who is the brother of the sheriff in the Cape Girardeau area in the 1940s, said that he remembered hearing of a strange crash and he remembers talk of little people associated with it.

Ryan Wood, in Majic Eyes Only, reported that Mann’s sister provided a sworn affidavit that con rmed the story. In other words, other members of the family are aware of the family history and report they too have seen the photograph and heard the tale.

In February 2008, Tyler, Texas, television reporter Gil ian Sheridan interviewed Charlette Mann. According to that report, Mann said, “We got validation by going to the archives in Washington D.C. and to see a top-secret declassi ed document that stated that there was in fact a crash retrieval in 1941 in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, for me, I have not forgotten holding that paper in my hand and realizing that my families [sic] story was real, was solid, and for me was just an answer to a longtime question.”

One of the documents said, “Based on al available evidence col ected from recovered exhibits currently under study by AMC, AFSWP, NEPA, AEC, ONR, NACA, JRDB, RAND, USAAF, SAG and MIT, are deemed

extraterrestrial in nature. is conclusion was reached as a result of comparison of artifacts (smal part redacted) discovered in 1941. e technology is outside the scope of U.S. science, even that of German rocket and aircra development.”

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□e problem here is that this is part of a leaked MJ-12 document and is

dated 24 Sep 47. □e MJ-12 documents themselves are wrapped in

controversy as noted in another chapter.

□e major witness, and the one with the most robust tale, is Charlette

Mann. Her sister has corroborated hearing the family talk of the night their grandfather was cal ed out to pray over the bodies recovered from the wrecked cra□. □e brother of the local sheriff in 1941 also seems to remember something about this.

□e problem is simply this. If there had been this crash in 1941, or for

that matter some kind of retrieval as seen by Cordel Hul , then the military would have been aware of the possibility of alien space travel and they would have been on the lookout for other examples. □ey would have expected other examples to be found. □at means they wouldn't have been caught by

surprise with the ying saucers that were rst reported in June 1947 and would have been better prepared for the Roswel UFO crash.

□e Roswel Bodies

Robert Hastings, in his book UFOs and Nukes, reports on an interview he

conducted with Chester Lytle concerning the Roswel crash. Lytle was an extraordinary man who ran his own engineering rm in Albuquerque, New

Mexico, and who had worked on the rst atomic bomb implosion trigger that was tested in Alamogordo in 1945. When the war ended, Lytle continued to manufacture parts for atomic weapons, worked with the Atomic Energy Commission which is now the Department of Energy, and

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was involved with many classi ed military projects. He was a wel - known

and wel -respected man who had a number of UFO sightings and a longtime

interest in them.

According to Hastings, he was interviewing Lytle about his involvement

with atomic energy and what he might know about UFO sightings near nuclear plants or facilities. Hastings said that with no prompting from him, Lytle moved on to the Roswel crash and told Hastings that Wil iam Blanchard, who had command of the 509th Bomb Group in Roswel in 1947, con rmed the alien nature of the event.

Lytle told Hastings that in February 1953, with Blanchard now a general

officer, they were in Alaska while Lytle's wife was in Chicago about to give birth. Lytle was desperate to get home and Blanchard said that they could take an Air Force aircra to Il inois, land at one of the bases close to Chicago, and Lytle could easily get home from there.

While on the ight, somehow the subject of UFOs came up, maybe because of a couple of sightings at Elmendorf Air Force Base near Anchorage sometime earlier. Blanchard then told Lytle that an alien cra

had crashed near Roswel . According to Hastings, Blanchard told Lytle that four bodies had been recovered.

Surprised by this, Hastings asked Lytle, "Blanchard actual y told you that the Roswel object was an alien spacecra ."

Lytle said, "Oh, absolutely."

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A digital re-creation of the crash in Roswell.

In break with the traditional story, Blanchard said that some of the bodies had gone original y to Muroc Army Air Field (now Edwards Air Force Base), but that they al eventual y wound up at Wright Field.

Now, granted, this is secondhand testimony about what Blanchard said,

but there is no reason for Lytle to invent it, and it is quite clear that Lytle held many clearances and had been trusted with the secrets of the Manhattan Project. He was a credible man.

□is testimony fails on one point and that is that we can't verify it with either Lytle or Blanchard. Both men are dead. □e documentation that exists is quite limited and subject to various interpretations. At this point, this is an anecdote that provides a bit of insight into the crash

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… and it is the rst time that Blanchard, through Lytle, gave us a number of bodies. Blanchard, according to Lytle, said, “Four.”

If this was the only testimony about alien bodies recovered with the Roswel crash, then we might be justi ed in dismissing it, though there is no reason for Lytle to have invented it. Pappy Henderson was a member of the 1st Air Transport, part of the 509th Bomb Group at Roswel in 1947. He was a trusted member of Colonel Blanchard’s staff and, according to his widow, Sappho Henderson, was cal ed on by Blanchard for special missions. He mentioned nothing to his wife about UFOs, crashed ships, or alien bodies until 1980 when a tabloid newspaper article reported on the Roswel crash.

Final y he felt that he could tel her what he knew.

□e creatures were, according to what Rowe remembered and what she

had been told, about the size of a ten year old….

He told her that he had own wreckage to Wright Field. At a reunion of

his old World War II ight crew, he told them the same thing. He also told them that he had seen the bodies of the alien ight crew in a hangar on the base. Henderson died in 1986 before any of the Roswel investigators had a chance to interview him, so the information about the alien nature of the creatures is al secondhand.

Frankie Rowe, who in 1947 was twelve years old told investigators that

her father, Roswel re ghter Dan Dwyer, had seen the bodies of the alien ight crew. He had driven out to the crash site. She said that her father had come home a□er his shi□ at the re station (which lasted about twenty-four hours) and had something important to say. He then told them, according to Rowe, that he had gone about thirty miles outside of Roswel and then a few miles back to the west. He said there had been some kind of a crash and that he had cal ed it a spaceship or a ying saucer or something.

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□en Rowe said one of the most important things she would say.

According to her, “I remember him saying that some of them helped pick up some pieces of the wreckage. He said he saw two bodies in bags and one that was walking around.”

She said, “[H]e said he was sure that there were bodies because the third one would go over to them … he talked about this third one would go back

and forth between different parts of the wreckage and was walking around dazed. He didn’t say if anyone tried to talk to this person.”

□e creatures were, according to what Rowe remembered and what she

had been told, about the size of a ten-year-old, meaning that they were smal er than a human adult. □e color was like that of an insect cal ed Child of the Earth (more commonly cal ed the Jerusalem Cricket), which is sort of copper color or maybe a sort of dark brown.

Rowe also saw a bit of metal ic debris that a state trooper claimed to have picked up in the eld. Rowe said that she thought it was about a week later.

She’d had some dental work done and had gone over to the rehouse to wait so that her father could drive her home. □e state policeman was there and he walked up to a table and said to the remen, “You guys aren’t going to believe what I’ve got.” He pul ed out his hand and had a piece of metal.

Rowe said, “I think I got to pick it up and crumple it one time. I can only remember doing it one time…. It just didn’t feel like anything … it was kind of a pewter color…. Everybody got out their knives or whatever and tried to cut and they tried to burn it.”

Unfortunately, as has happened so o□en in this case, no researcher had a chance to talk with Rowe’s father. He died long before the

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investigation began. But I did have the opportunity to talk with her sister, Helen Cahil .

She was married in 1947 and living in California at the time of the Roswel crash, but had heard some discussion about the events during a visit to New Mexico in 1960. Although her information wasn't as complete as that of Rowe, it con rmed, for what it's worth, that Rowe did not invent the tale of the crash. Of course, it does little to validate it, except to suggest that Rowe's father was talking about a UFO crash long before the reports of the Roswel events came to light and at a time when few people thought of UFOs as being from other worlds. Other explanations seemed to make people happier.

□ere is one problem with al this, however. According to Rowe, she'd had some oral surgery which had begun to bleed, which was why she had

been in Roswel in the middle of July 1947. □at was why she had been at the re-house when the state policeman had brought in the metal ic debris.

Although records are not complete, there are none to show that Rowe's oral surgery was done in July 1947 or that there were later complications.

Skeptics, however, have suggested that her story isn't true and cited both a city councilman who told them that the Roswel Fire Department didn't

make runs outside the city limits and that a number of men who had been

with the department in 1947 remembered nothing about it.

Records kept at the re station show that the department did make runs

outside the city limits. On June 21, 1947, according to the re log, Pumper No. 4 made a run "out side city limit." □e problem is that

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there is no listing for a run that would correspond to the date of the UFO crash in early July.

Karl P ock, in his book Roswel : Inconvenient Facts and the Wil to Believe, rejected Rowe's story because he'd talked to three former re ghters who claimed no knowledge of the events and who, it was implied, refuted

what Frankie Rowe said. To him, this was the "smoking gun." He could nd no corroboration for Rowe's story.

But P ock wasn't quite right in his assertion. According to one of those same re ghters, P ock didn't tel the whole story, or he didn't get al the facts. One of the men interviewed by P ock con rmed that the Roswel Fire Department hadn't made a run outside the city to the crash site.

□e man con rmed, in two interviews conducted by two different

researchers in 2010, the re department didn't make a run to the crash site, though that says nothing about runs outside the city. But then this long-retired re ghter said something else. When asked if he knew Dan Dwyer,

Frankie Rowe's father, he said that a colonel had come out from the base and told them not to go out there to the crash site. □at they, the military, would handle it. He added that Dwyer, in his personal car, did drive out to the crash site. Dwyer and not the re department had gone out, which explains why there is no record of it in the rehouse records and why other re ghters didn't remember it. □ey were not involved.

□e retired re ghter was quite clear about these points. □ey had been

visited by an officer from the base, they had been told not to go out there, but Dwyer, in his personal car, did.

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□e Walter Haut Affidavit

Walter Haut was an officer with the 509th Bomb Group in 1947. While a member of a ight crew, he had an additional duty as the public information officer for the base. He was the man who wrote the press release that said they had “captured” a ying saucer on a ranch in the Roswel region. For more than twenty years he maintained that the only thing he had done was write and deliver the press release. He didn’t see the cra□ and he didn’t see the bodies. He told every researcher and investigator that he had a very limited role in the Roswel case. Colonel Blanchard had dictated his role to him.

But then, in about 2000, Haut’s story began to change. Wendy Connors

and Dennis Balthaser interviewed Haut a□er a French lm crew had been to New Mexico to interview him about the UFO crash. He said that he had seen the bodies … or body, depending on which statement by Haut you wish to accept. He later expanded these statements in his interviews with Connors and Balthaser. He even consented to having a video recording made of that interview.

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But the water is a stil more muddied. Gildas Bourdais, a French UFO

researcher who has written his own book on the Roswel crash, said he had talked to the French crew director and that Haut said nothing about bodies on camera. On UFO UpDates, Bourais wrote, “He [Vincent Giel y] told me

that, when he did his lmed interview of Walter Haut with Wendy Connors, Haut looked like someone who wished to say more, but could not. □is lasted a long time, and he nal y decided, a little disappointed, to end the interview. But then, he found Wendy, alone in another room, extremely disappointed because, she told him, she felt Haut was just about to talk when he ended the interview. □at’s what Giel y told me. He did not tel me that Haut had talked about seeing the cra□ and bodies. If he did, he may have promised not to repeat it, I don’t know.”

So, there is now a question of just what Haut did say to the French crew and what he said on camera as opposed to what he said in private. Connors and Balthaser said that Haut said something to the French which inspired the two of them to seek an audience with Haut to explain his earlier years in the military and, according to them, ask a few questions to clarify the situation Haut found himself in back in 1947.

For those who have seen the Connors/Balthaser interview, there are some very disturbing statements by Haut. He is either badly confused, or he is deeply con icted about revealing secrets he had kept for more than sixty years, or he just couldn’t keep his new story straight, probably because of his advanced age. He le□ a somewhat rambling mishmash of contradictory information.

Here is just a short portion of part of that rather confused statement:

“□at’s a rough one [about the appearance of the cra□] I haven’t even thought about it low these many years and I honestly can’t even

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visualize it, whether stil in it's shape, but a lot of dings in it…. I do not remember…. I would venture a guess that probably a diameter of, uh, somewhere around

25□…. To the best of my remembrance there was one body … it was relatively a smal body comparable to uh, oh maybe a 11 year old, 10 or 11

year old child. It was pretty wel beat up. I cannot come and give you, to be honest, anything other than that. I remember something about the arms and I am trying to visualize that and al of a sudden it starts going through my

little head that that they show some of those long arms in the cartoons…. I thought there was several bodies … for some reason I feel there were several bodies … the more I think about it the more I start to get an idea it was single body."

And then to thoroughly confuse the issue, Haut retreated to the line he

had been using from the very beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s as he talked with various UFO investigators. He said, "I didn't even see one. I just wrote a press release."

Connors then said, "I am talking about when you saw a body in the hangar partly covered by the tarp. You only saw the one."

Walter said, "Yes."

But to real y complicate the issue, Walter also said in that same interview:

"I don't real y know. I … it hurts me to try and give an answer because I am not certain of the whole thing. I feel there has been information released that uh maybe shouldn't have been released, maybe the information that we got in the operation of releases maybe something you can put out to anybody. I just

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… I don’t know, I don’t want to talk about a lot of the detail number one because I don’t have a lot of knowledge about the detail, everybody thinks that I saw them, I didn’t, I put out a press release that Colonel Blanchard told me what he wanted in the press release and I ran it into town and gave it to the news media and went home and ate lunch.”

□e affidavit, however, is a very clear and concise statement about al this. Haut said (or rather signed the statement that said … and that is probably a distinction we should make at this point because of some of the controversy):

. Before leaving the base, Col. Blanchard took me personal y to Building 84, a B-29 hangar located on the east side of the tarmac. Upon rst approaching the building, I observed that it was under heavy guard both outside and inside.

Once inside, I was permitted from a safe distance to rst observe the object just recovered north of town. It was approx. 12 to 15 feet in length, not quite as wide, about 6 feet high, and more of an egg shape. Lighting was poor, but its surface did appear metal ic. No windows, portholes, wings, tail section, or landing gear were visible….

Also from a distance, I was able to see a couple of bodies under a canvas tarpaulin. Only the heads extended beyond the covering, and I was not able to make out any features. □e heads did appear larger than normal and the contour of the canvas suggested the size of a 10-year-old child. At a later date in Blanchard’s office, he would extend his arm about 4 feet above the oor to indicate the height.

“I thought there was several bodies … for some reason I feel there were

several bodies …”

□ere are other statements that Haut made over the years, including ones that I recorded. Everyone knows that he said, for decades, al he

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had done was write the press release. Now there is a new statement in which he is in the middle of this with al the inside knowledge that anyone could hope for.

□e problem is not that his earlier statements contradict his later statements, but that his later statements were highly confused, and highly contradictory even inside one interview, and inside one statement in that interview. Haut is on the record in too many places saying that al he did was write the press release. He is seen in the Connors/Balthaser interview giving that same story but wrapping it around tales of bodies and cra□.

□ere are those who suggest that Haut was con icted about al this, maybe by his age, or maybe it is that he wanted to honor the oath he had taken so long ago. He wanted to honor the promise he had made to Colonel Blanchard so long ago. But he also believed that the information was too important to be withheld and that it belonged, not just to the Army, the Air Force, or the government, but to everyone. Even as he provided hints about what he had seen and what he knew, he wasn't able to tolerate talking about it directly. He had to come at it from the side.

Had Haut's later statements been consistent inside the context of the interview and had they been consistent throughout that interview and other, later ones, then we could say that he was providing us with information that he'd had al these years. But that's not what we have here. We have contradictory statements.

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Enter Richard C. Harris

ere is some con rmation from another source that does provide

relevant information. Richard C. Harris, who was an assistant nance officer of the 509th, lived in Albuquerque. During my interview with him, I saw a frail man who needed live-in help. He was, natural y, quite interested in the Roswel UFO case, having served at the base in 1947. He is in the Yearbook, so there is con rmation that he was there at the right time.

But in his living room was a smal bookcase that held a stack of books

dealing with UFOs, the Roswel case, and MJ-12. Harris was a rm believer in MJ-12 and alien visitation.

is simply means that he was familiar with the case as it had been written about in the various books. He had seen many of the documentaries of the case so he could have been badly contaminated as a source. Having seen the documentaries and read the books and magazine articles doesn’t mean that what he said was based on what he had read and seen and not

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whol y on his memories, but we must be aware that it al could be colored by those other sources.

Richard Harris

Anyone who has served in a command position or a position of responsibility in the military knows that everything must be paid for. □ere are al sorts of funds that are designated for al sorts of purposes and it is considered il egal to take funds appropriated for one purpose and use them for another. □is means that funds meant to pay for a unit's ight training, for example, can't be used to transport alien bodies and cra□ from one location to another. Funds must be designated for that purpose. (Unless, of course, it's a cross-country navigation problem and therefore training, and if some of the wreckage, or an alien body or two, are on the aircra□, hey, that's just a bonus.)

No, it doesn't have to say moving an alien body from Roswel to Wright

Field, but the funds wil have to be appropriated for moving equipment from Roswel to Wright Field. □e money must be juggled.

Harris said that they worked hard to nd the money from legal sources,

that they worked hard to cover the real purpose because there would be audits, and there would be examinations that had nothing to do with the crash but everything to do with looking for fraud. So the money spent to house those brought in, for the aircra□ ights to and from various locations, for the special equipment, and to pay the soldiers were al juggled around so that it was properly annotated and properly spent. Harris was proud of the job they had done covering the paper trail (not unlike comments that Colonel Patrick Saunders, the Roswel base adjutant in 1947, had made to family members about hiding the trail).

□e key point of Harris' story was this little anecdote. He said that he

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had been out near one of the hangars and ran into Walter Haut. Haut told him what was on the other side of the door, meaning one of the dead aliens, and told Harris he could take a quick look. Harris said that he put his hand on the doorknob, but didn't turn it. For some reason his curiosity failed him at that point. He didn't take the look that Haut had told him to.

□is, of course, suggests that Haut had deeper knowledge and Harris told me this more than a decade before the Haut affidavit was published. It is some corroboration for Haut's new story. It's not a very good corroboration, but it is some.

Another Firsthand Account from Roswel

□omas Gonzales was stationed in Roswel in July 1947, and told Don Ecker and John Price that he had seen the alien creatures. At the time he was a sergeant in the Transportation section, but apparently he was used for part of the recovery operation.

He said that the cra□ itself looked more like an airfoil than it did like one of the ying saucers. He didn't say much about the cra□, but concentrated on what he cal ed the bodies of the "little men." He said that they were not like those little gray men who were responsible for alien abductions.

In his interview with me, Gonzales was not very articulate, but was able to communicate his observations. He did one other thing. He carved a number of wooden gures that he said resembled the alien beings he had

seen. □ese show a range of beings, al with fairly large, black eyes. □eir arms are crossed on their chests and one or two of them suggest large hips, but that might be little more than poor carving technique.

Gonzales said that a□er he participated in the recovery of the aliens, he was transferred off the base quickly. He said that it happened so

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fast that he lost some of his personal property and the transfer caused some trouble for his family.

□ese wooden aliens were carved by eyewitness □omas Gonzales.

□e Tomato Man Pictures

In what is one of the worst cases of a misidenti ed picture, UFO researchers announced they had received photographs of an alien body taken at the scene of a 1948 UFO crash in Mexico.

A year a□er the Roswel UFO crash, another object reportedly fel about

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thirty miles southwest of Laredo, Texas, across the Rio Grande River in Mexico. □en-Secretary of State General George C. Marshal , who gured prominently in the Aztec just months before, coordinated the retrieval with the Mexican government so that American military forces could take charge of the wreckage. Marshal , according to the story, claimed it was an experimental cra□ from White Sands Proving Grounds that had gone out of

control and crashed just over the border.

□is part of the story wasn't al that far-fetched given the history of missile tests in the area. A rocket launched from White Sands had gone out of control and crashed near Juarez, Mexico, across the border from El Paso, Texas, in 1947. Fortunately no one was injured and the damage was minimal but launches at White Sands were suspended for several weeks until new safety procedures could be designed.

Colonel John W. Bowen, who was the provost marshal at Fort Worth, according to this story, was detailed to take charge of the operation in Mexico, though there were military bases closer including Fort Bliss in El Paso and Fort Hood near San Antonio. □e crash area was quickly cordoned

off and men were sent in to secure it and clean up the wreckage. It was hauled from Mexico to a location in San Antonio for processing, investigation, and eventual shipping to other Air Force facilities that could exploit the nd.

However, before that was done, a special photographer was sent in, at least according to a man who claimed to be that photographer. He said that he was a Navy photographer and his job was to photograph everything as it was found as a way of documenting the case. □is source surfaced in December 1978 and told researchers at the Mutual Anomaly Research

Center and Evaluation Network (MARCEN) that as a young man, he had been detailed to take photographs of a ying saucer wreck.

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To prove it, he included an eight-by-ten glossy print showing the body of one of the aliens kil ed in the crash. When the MARCEN members questioned him, suggesting that to them this looked more like a human pilot kil ed in a light plane crash, they received a three-page reply with much more detail.

According to the story told by this man, at about 1322 hours (1:22 P.M.) on July 7, the Distance Early Warning (DEW) line detected an object traveling at speeds of more than two thousand miles per hour as it ew over Washington state, headed to the southeast. As it entered the airspace over Texas, two ghters were scrambled to intercept and identify the object.

As the two F-94 ghters approached, the UFO made a 90-degree turn

without decreasing its speed. At 2:10 P.M., other ghters, which had joined the pursuit, radioed that the object was slowing and now wobbling. At 2:29

P.M., it disappeared from the radar, but by using triangulation, the military realized that the object was down, in Mexico, but not al that far from Laredo. □at is, unless it had own for any distance under the radar coverage. □en it could be anywhere.

At about 6:30 P.M., an American detachment, apparently sent from Carswel Air Force Base, was on the scene of the crash, which had been located by others. □e detachment commander was noti ed that a special

photographic unit was going to be dispatched to preserve the scene in pictures. □is included the anonymous source who had somehow retained

copies of some of the photographs he'd taken of this "top secret plane crash."

According to this guy, the photographic team was picked up in an L-19

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at 9:30 P.M. He said it was uncomfortable in the smal airplane with the ve team members and al their equipment on board.

He said that they arrived at 2:10 A.M. and circled the area so they got an overview of the crash site. □ey saw a disc-shaped object that was stil burning on a heavily vegetated hil . Apparently, there were no Mexicans, either civilians or military, near the site, and it was in a remote area.

According to the source, although the cra□ and the debris were unusual,

some of it looked as if it had come from Earth. □ere was, however, an absence of wiring, glass, wood, rubber, or paper. □e whole thing looked to be held together by bolts, but they couldn't remove them and nal y just used brute force to chisel them off. □ey used diamond dril s and saws, and on the lighter metals used cutting torches so they could disassemble the cra□

and take it in pieces to the various Air Force facilities for study.

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□is purported photo of an alien was taken by Col. John W. Bowen and given to researchers at the Mutual Anomaly Research Center and Evaluation

Network (MARCEN).

A metal urgist who was unidenti ed by the photographer, and therefore

remains anonymous, apparently told the photographer that the structure was a honey-combed crystal ine that was not like anything he had ever seen on Earth. He thought it might be silicon-based.

□e body found in the wreckage, and photographed by the source, was

about four feet, six inches tal with a large head. □ere were no eyes, destroyed by either the crash or the re, but there were eye sockets. □ere were no visible ears, nose, or lips, and there was just a slit for a mouth without either teeth or a tongue. □e arms were longer than a human's

would be on that short of a frame and ended in a four-digit claw. □e legs were of normal proportions with short feet but no toes. Both the arms and legs seemed to have joints in about the same place as humans.

□ese details were provided by the source who heard the doctors talking

as they conducted their preliminary autopsy on the site while he took pictures. Because he had official business, his movements were not restricted while he was on the site.

□e next day, at about 1:00 P.M., a C-47 arrived and the body was then

shipped out of Mexico. □e man didn't know where it might have gone.

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What was le□ of the wreckage was then loaded into trucks to be transported into the United States. He didn't know their destination either.

□e photographer wrote that he then returned to White Sands and began to develop the lm and make the prints. He worked with a team of

other photographic experts and they al were watched by Marines. □e team was disbanded when their task was completed and the commander of that

detachment, whoever he was, returned to Washington, never to be seen or

heard from again.

A few years later, the photographer said he removed forty negatives from the Top Secret le, made duplicates, and then put the original pictures back.

□at was why he had the pictures of the burned alien creature … or so he

said.

Wil iam Steinman reported in his book, UFO Crash at Aztec, that, according to members of MARCEN, including Wil ard McIntyre and

Dennis Pilichis of □e UFO Information Network (UFOIN), and a booklet

they wrote, McIntyre and Pilichis were able to secure an original negative.

□at is, one of the copy negatives that the Navy man had made in the late 1940s or early 1950s. □ey sent it off to Kodak for analysis. According to Kodak, at least as reported by McIntyre and Pilichis, Kodak found the negative to be at least thirty years old and they

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could detect no evidence of photographic trickery. Saying nothing about the image contained on the negative, they concluded that the negative showed no obvious signs of tampering.

Ron Schaffner of the old Ohio UFO Investigators League (OUFOIL) put together a report on the photographs, based on research that he had conducted. He said that he, along with col eagues, wrote to Kodak, asking them about the tests they had conducted on the negatives. He wrote about the Kodak response, saying, “We were not surprised when the response came back that Kodak was not aware of any photo work done on the pictures enclosed. Furthermore, their representative said that Kodak would not perform any type of testing that we desired for authenticity.”

□ere were other problems with this story. □e L-19 that the

photographer rode in could not carry ve passengers. It was a modi ed civilian aircra□ that would original y carry four, but the L-19 had been reduced to a two-seat aircra□. □at is, it carried a pilot and one passenger.

□ere is a problem with claiming that the UFO was spotted by radars on

the DEW Line. While distance early warning (DEW) was probably

discussed in 1948, and military planners realized that a Soviet missile attack would probably come over the North Pole, the line itself hadn’t been built yet. It wasn’t until February 15, 1954, that the United States and Canada agreed to build the DEW Line, so those radars were not in place in 1948.

□e troubling aspect of this case is that the photographer supplied, eventual y, two photographs of two bodies he claimed to be aliens. Both are very gruesome. Both show what was once a living creature that has been badly burned. According to some, those creatures are aliens. To others, they are not.

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A recent photograph of the crash site at Aztec.

Although the photographer had claimed there were no wires in the cra□,

in one of the pictures, you can see the burned remains of those wires. □ere seems to be other, terrestrial y made debris around the body as wel , including a six-sided bolt.

□e clincher, however, for most UFO researchers, for the skeptics, and

nearly anyone else, are the wire frames of a pair of standard-issue aviator glasses without lenses. □ese can be seen near the le□ shoulder of the body.

It is quite clear that this photograph, claimed to be an alien, is of a human being kil ed in an aircra□ accident. □e burns, and the swel ing of the head, are consistent with exposure to high temperatures. Damage done to other areas of the body visible in the picture, and damage done to the wreckage, are consistent with a re. □e man who provided the pictures must have known what they showed, but

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invented the story of the dead and burned alien to make it sound better.

□is is the picture of a human kil ed in an aircra□ accident. It seems wrong that this unidenti ed source should be able to exploit it in this way.

Family and friends of the pilot would be quite distressed to learn what has happened here, but in today's hardened society, no one seems worried about that.

□is report should be removed from the ufological records because it has

a clear explanation. It should be relegated to a footnote, only because there is published information, both in book form and on the Internet, that claims this might have been extraterrestrial. No matter what a few con rmed believers might think, this has nothing to do with alien visitation.

□e Alien Autopsy

It might be said that the story of the alien autopsy doesn't begin in 1995

when the rumors began to circulate, but in 1993 when Ray Santil i met with British UFO researcher Philip Mantle. Santil i, the man who ended up with the lm, was or is a British music promoter who had been in the United States searching for footage of some of the early stars of rock and rol . He learned that an elderly man held some key footage that might have been from an early performance of Elvis Presley made in Cleveland, Ohio. Santil i certainly wanted that footage.

Based on information published by Mantle in his Roswel Alien Autopsy

book and published by Noe Torre of Roswel books.com, British rock musician Reg Presley, who had been the lead singer for □e Troggs,

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was told by his manager that Santil i had some lm that he, Presley, might nd interesting. Presley talked to Santil i and Santil i sent him a copy of what would become known as “□e Tent Footage.”

□is dark and rather unspectacular lm showed what was claimed to be

the autopsy of an alien creature inside a tent in New Mexico, apparently taken in 1947. Presley said that he contacted two UFO researchers, and al three were convinced the footage had been shot original y on videotape and not photographic lm. □ey were not impressed.

□is wasn’t the only footage that was rumored to exist. Santil i had suggested there was other footage available but that it was going to cost a great deal of money to buy that lm from the owner. Santil i gave Presley more details on the other footage that would eventual y be seen by mil ions in dozens of documentaries about UFOs and UFO crashes aired around the

world.

Presley, because of his work on crop circles, had been invited to participate on a live talk show that aired in England on January 9, 1995, though Mantle suggested it was on January 14. Presley cal ed Santil i and asked permission to mention the autopsy footage. Presley would say later that Santil i hesitated, but then gave permission.

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At that point Presley had been told that there was other, better footage available and he hoped that claim was true. He might have suspected that he was about to unleash a restorm and, according to what he told Mantle later, by the time he got home from the live show, his telephone was ringing.

□ere were cal s from around the world inquiring about the claims of lm of an alien creature.

John Humphreys works on the model alien he created.

It was months before Presley, along with crop circle investigator Colin

Andrews and another fel ow, also interested in UFOs, saw the other rumored footage. □is showed an autopsy conducted in what seemed to be a

hospital morgue with the doctors dressed in some sort of contamination or chemical protective suits complete with helmets and separate air, and another doctor observing behind some sort of glass

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wal , wearing a surgical-type mask. □is would be the lm that would intrigue the rest of the world.

□e whole story then, as told by Santil i, suggested that an American Army cameraman who had lmed the autopsy had somehow managed to

keep some of that lm. □ese were original y suggested to be “out-takes” or reels that needed special processing, according to the cameraman, but

somehow were never returned to Army control. He would later claim that he had been caught in the ri□ when the Air Force broke off from the Army and that somehow al this highly classi ed material had gotten lost in the process. It seemed to be a fairly cavalier way to handle material that should have been highly classi ed, but that was what the man al egedly told Santil i.

Among those searching for answers about the autopsy was an American,

Kent Jeffrey, an airline pilot who had an interest in UFOs in general and the Roswel UFO crash in particular. According to Jeffrey’s information, Santil i had paid about a hundred thousand dol ars for the lm but Santil i would later not provide any sort of monetary gure.

□e story circulated by Santil i at that time was that the cameraman had

made a duplicate of the original lm so that the Army wouldn’t know that some of it was missing. □at was, of course, a different story than the lm being “outtakes,” which was the original claim. Or an even later claim that somehow, as the Air Force broke off from the Army, no one had ever arrived to claim the lm.

□ere were other reports from other researchers as wel . First word was

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that there were □een rol s of lm of about ten minutes each. □at meant

two hours and thirty minutes of footage. □ere was a preliminary autopsy in a tent, more of an autopsy in a hospital operating room, lm of the debris eld with President Truman walking across it, and pictures of the cra□ as it was li□ed onto a atbed truck to be taken out of the area. Al of the descriptions sounded as if the lm was spectacular and authentic because, if nothing else, it would be nearly impossible to produce the footage of President Truman on the crash site, let alone the lm of a huge truck and saucer being li□ed onto it by a crane.

More information about this appeared when, in the spring of 1995, Mantle sent a letter to various UFO researchers identifying the cameraman as Jack Barnett. Apparently, according to some sources, Santil i had slipped up and inadvertently revealed the man's real name. Searches began trying to locate any Barnett who had a connection to motion picture photography, whether through the military, old newsreel services, which had been one suggestion, or Hol ywood.

Years later, Santil i would say that he had invented the name as a red herring. It took researchers in different directions as they tried to nd a Jack Barnett who t the description that had been developed about the cameraman. None of those searches bore fruit, though it convinced some that the autopsy was a fake.

And it shi□ed the inquiry from the footage itself to the search for a man.

If Barnett could be found, it would go a long way to establish the authenticity of the lm.

With interest in the lm mounting, Santil i decided that something more

had to be done. You might say that he saw an opportunity that was slipping away. An opportunity that he had spent two years creating.

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He arranged for members of the media, representatives from television networks around the world, UFO researchers, and a few others who could get to London, to screen the lm on May 5, 1995.

Kent Jeffrey, because of his airline job and his seniority in his position at the airline, could attend the screening without incurring the costs of an airline ticket to London. A□er seeing it himself, he would write a lengthy report on his impressions during that screening. In a special bul etin issued by the International Roswel Initiative (an organization Jeffrey had created in an attempt to uncover more information about the Roswel UFO crash), dated May 25, 1995, Jeffrey outlined his whole experience at the showing of the lm. He wrote:

Ray Santilli in 1995

□e lm in question is presently in the possession of a company in London, Merlin Productions, owned by a Mr. Ray Santil i. On Friday, May 5, 1995, there was a special showing at the Museum of London. □ere were approximately one hundred people present…. Despite the

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fact that the lm is total y unauthenticated, it has received extensive publicity in Europe….

□e actual showing of the lm took place just a□er 1:00 P.M. in a smal auditorium that is part of the Museum of London complex. A handout was distributed at the sign-in table consisting of a copy of the al eged MJ-12

brie ng papers and a yel ow cover sheet referencing the 1947 Roswel crash and the 509th Bomb Group (at Roswel Army Air Field). Merlin Productions was apparently very concerned about pictures being taken because everyone was physical y searched (frisked) for cameras upon entering the auditorium.

□ere was no speaker or announcement to formal y welcome those present or to introduce the lm. □is seems somewhat bizarre and discourteous, as people had come from al over the world for this showing. Also conspicuously absent was a person on stage a□erward to publicly answer questions pertaining to the lm….

At about 1:05 P.M., the lights dimmed and the lm started rol ing. Before the actual pictures began, a few short statements scrol ed by on the screen with

reference to the lm having been “acquired from the cameraman who original y shot the footage” and to the copyright being “exclusively owned by Merlin Communications.” Interestingly, one would think that if the lm were genuine, the copyright would be “exclusively owned” by the United States government.

Also, contrary to what had been said previously about “10-minute reels,” there was now a statement on the screen that the lm was recorded on “three-minute” reels….

□e lm opened abruptly with its single scene of a smal operating or autopsy room with plain white wal s and a table in the middle containing an unclad body lying face up. Two individuals in white anticontamination suits, complete with hoods and narrow, rectangular

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glass face plates, were the only gures visible in the room. A third person, dressed in white hospital-type garb, was visible through a large glass partition, or window. Although he was outside the sealed room standing behind solid glass, he was wearing a surgical mask that covered his entire face….

□e film was black and white and the focus, at times, was inadequate.

Jeffrey described the procedures that were fol owed in the autopsy room

as the two doctors circled the body, cutting into it in what seemed to be a rather cavalier fashion. It is clear from the footage that the cameraman was also in the room, circulating and trying to stay out of the way of the doctors, and there was no sign of a mounted camera in that footage. □e lm was

black and white and the focus, at times, was inadequate. It also seemed odd, at least to some, that the cameraman never seemed to get in the way of the doctors, and the doctors never looked at the camera or the cameraman. To some, this suggested footage created with professional actors rather than doctors and an Army cameraman. A□er al , amateurs always look into the

camera at some point, but these guys didn't.

Jeffrey, in his report, wrote, "I would like to state up front and unequivocal y that there is no (zero!!!) doubt in my mind that this lm is a fraud."

Although there was a claim of many canisters and a suggestion of more

than two hours of lm, al that was released by Santil i for broadcast by

various television networks around the world lasted just over twenty minutes. In addition, there were then scenes of the metal ic debris col ected and displayed on tables in a single room. A lone gure is seen, moving among it, li□ing some of it, but he is photographed from the

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rear so that his identity, like that of those in the autopsy footage, is masked. □ere is nothing in any of the scenes that al ow for independent veri cation or for identi cation of any of those participating at any level.

Before any of the specials could be aired around the world, the Sunday

Times in London published an article with the headline, “Film that ‘proves’

aliens visited earth is a hoax.” □e article, written by Maurice Chittenden, reported that “experts cal ed in by Channel 4 [a British television network], which is due to screen the lm as part of a documentary on August 28

[1995], have declared it bogus. A source close to the documentary said: ‘We have had special effects guys look at it and they say it’s a fake.’“

Chittenden continued in the article, writing, “Among the aws found by

□e Sunday Times are: ‘Security coding’ on one lm disappeared when its accuracy was chal enged. A ‘letter of authentication’ from Kodak was signed by a salesman. President Truman, supposedly visible on the lm, was not in New Mexico at the time [and Mantle said much later that this was not a claim made by Santil i]. Symbols seen on particles of wreckage are total y different to those remembered by an eyewitness. ‘Doctors’—performing a supposedly unique autopsy on an alien—remove black lenses from his eyes

in a matter of seconds, as if they knew what to expect.”

□ese points were, for the most part, the same that had been raised by

UFO researchers during their attempts to verify the authenticity of the lm.

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What was most troubling was not that there were problems, but that the revelation of those problems resulted in an alteration of the story. When evidence was presented that suggested the security markings, for example, were more appropriate to Hol ywood than they were to the American military, those markings disappeared. □at, in and of itself, suggested the lm was a hoax.

Santil i, however, maintained that the lm was authentic. To prove it, he was going to al ow some of the documentary producers an opportunity to

meet with the cameraman. If they could sit and talk with him, then one of

the major problems, the lack of provenance, would be eliminated. But the meeting never materialized. John Purdie, the producer of the Channel 4

documentary in Great Britain, did receive a phone cal from a man who claimed to be the cameraman. □ey spoke for two minutes and almost no

questions raised by Purdie were answered. It proved nothing.

□e Film Analysis

Kodak came up again. In its September 1996 issue, Fortean Times reported, "□e hint of conspiracy is underlined by Ray Santil i.… Asked whether he stil plans to accept Kodak's offer to analyze the lm, he answers:

'With al due respect to Kodak, I simply do not trust an American corporation with lucrative defense contracts.' Way to go, Ray."

Smal pieces of the lm began to circulate in the spring of 1995 as the

story began to leak. A short segment of leader, the opaque strip at the beginning of a movie, was provided for analysis. Kodak con rmed

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that a coding on it, a square and a triangle, suggested the lm might be from 1947.

□e problem was Kodak recycled the codes, so the lm could have been manufactured in 1927 or 1967. Besides, there were no images on the leader, so it could have been a piece of lm from anything or anywhere, not necessarily from the autopsy footage, and therefore proved nothing other than Santil i had a piece of lm with the proper coding on it. It was why Kodak wanted a piece of lm with the alien image on it.

Santil i did provide a few people with smal sections of lm with some

kind of image on them. Philip Mantle had three or four frames that contained a brightly lighted doorway, or what might have been a doorway, that might have been part of the autopsy footage, but then again, it might not. Mantle told others that he had no footage with the alien or the interior of the autopsy room visible which would prove that it was part of the lm.

Just that brightly lighted door that might have been part of the original autopsy footage, or might just have been a few frames of another lm used because the lm was from the right era.

Bob Kiviat, producer of Alien Autopsy: Fact or Fiction, broadcast on Fox Television in the United States in 1995, was also given a smal section of lm. Again nothing that would identify it as having come from the actual

autopsy footage could be seen. His original section of lm was even shorter than that provided to Mantle.

Kodak insisted that they could provide fairly accurate dating, but they

required several feet of lm. □ey suggested that, over the years, lm would shrink, and by measuring the distance between the sprockets, they could

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estimate the age. Chemical analysis, especial y since the basic composition of lm had changed a□er 1947, could provide additional clues. Kodak insisted they receive, at a minimum, one frame with the alien visible on it.

□at way they would know that their analysis was not being wasted on something that came from another lm. □at didn't happen and it appears it never wil .

Santilli holding a film can containing the movie of an alien autopsy. □e film later disappeared.

But the argument about lm testing didn't end there. According to Neil

Morris, a UFO researcher living in England, "A piece of lm has been tested.

Bob Shel 's [Shel was one time editor of Shutterbug magazine] fragment was submitted to an Italian University for chemical analysis. □e tests concluded the lm stock was Kodak Cinepac Triacitate stock but as kodak [sic] had only published details of vers 1 and 2 out of 4

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types produced, it wasn't possible to make an exact identi cation though a very close match was found for type 2. Kodak Triacitate lm was phased out in the mid 1950s in favour of the tougher Polyester lm base stil in use today…."

Which, of course, makes you wonder why it was necessary to go to Italy

for the analysis and why it wasn't completed by Kodak. □at is not to say that

the Italian analysis is of no value, only that since the lm was Kodak stock it would have been better to get an answer from Kodak.

Morris also wrote, "Bob Shel al owed his fragment to be tested as he believed at the time it was no use in verifying the lms [sic] age, but as I have shown [in other arguments] his fragment matches exactly those seen

on Ray's "Footage" VHS tape and when combined with those fragments shows a sheet covered table in what could be the autopsy room with bowls, clipboard, and table. Some clips in the AA [alien autopsy] show a doorway in wal 4 which col ates with the doorway seen in Bob's fragment, a doorway and a wal Spyros [Melaris, who was involved in the creation of the lm]

maintains he did not build in his 'set'…. "

But the problem here is that the argument is centered around some speculations and not on concrete evidence. It would seem that if the autopsy was real, then those holding the lm would not be playing games with the authentication. □ey would be providing everything they could to aid in this, unless there was a reason to keep people guessing.

□e Cameraman and Authentication

A□er the British and American specials were aired, there was renewed

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interest, and Santil i's company began sel ing raw videotapes of the autopsy footage for about □y dol ars each. It was claimed that additional footage, not seen in the specials, was on the video, but that was of the tent autopsy which was so dark as to be nearly useless as evidence, more of the debris footage, and little else.

Other problems with the lm began to surface as wel . For example, it

had been suggested early on that the lm showed the autopsy of the body of a being recovered a□er the Roswel crash. Other information, including the al eged date of the autopsy and the date of the crash, did not fol ow the conventional wisdom of the Roswel case. Santil i and his friends, and the cameraman communicating through Santil i, were now suggesting the crash

and recovery had taken place more than a month earlier, that is, in late May 1947, and while stil in New Mexico, not al that close to Roswel .

Almost universal y, UFO researchers, television producers and reporters, and anyone else interested in the lm were demanding the cameraman come

forward. Without him, to complete the chain of custody, the lm was useless. Couple this to the fact that Santil i, to that point, had refused to provide anything that would be of value in authenticating the lm, the only conclusion available was that the lm was just an interesting aberration and probably a hoax.

Almost universally, UFO researchers, television producers and

reporters, and anyone else interested in the film were demanding the

cameraman come forward.

Santil i, through his various contacts including Bob Shel , nal y offered the cameraman's al eged audiotaped statement. Shel , appearing on Cable Radio Network's September 2, 1995 edition of UFOs Tonight! hosted by Don Ecker, said that the transcript being

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circulated by him and Santil i was an exact transcript of the cameraman's statement given at an earlier date. Under close questioning by Ecker, Shel said that he had heard the original tape and

read or typed the transcript himself, so that he could verify the authenticity of the transcript. At any rate, the transcript was an exact copy of what the cameraman had said. □is discussion, recorded as a matter of course by Ecker, as he did with al his radio programs, would become important to understanding more about the case.

During the conversation, Ecker said, "Somebody in the United Kingdom

sent me al egedly the cameraman's statement, along with some facsimiles that were al egedly the lm labels. Now, a number of weeks ago I read this entire statement verbatim on the air. And I think this is somewhat tel ing in itself. Now, this is purportedly this gentleman's actual statement. And I think it's very safe to say in this statement may be information he original y gave Ray Santil i, this is not the way an American former serviceman would ever describe himself. Have you…. "

Shel interrupted at that point and said, "What you have is probably the rst version of that."

"Yeah," said Ecker, ignoring what Shel had said. "And what I'm saying

[is] this was passed off as his actual statement by Santil i, original y. And I think it's very safe to say that just ain't so, okay? It was passed off deceptively."

Shel responded by saying, "Wel , yeah, but I think you have to understand what exactly happened. □e cameraman made a taped

statement. □e tape was mailed to Santil i … Santil i had one of his secretaries transcribe it. □e secretary is British."

"Okay."

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Shel continued. “So quite a bit of British [terminology] got into the transcript…. I have gone over and retranscribed it and posted it this week on CompuServe’s library.”

Ecker asked, “ From the actual tape?”

“Yes.”

“You have a copy of the tape?”

From Roswell, he was driven overland to the crash site, which, again, makes no sense logistically.

“Yes.”

Later, Shel would deny that he had heard the actual tape or that he ever spoke to the cameraman. In other words, Shel , if he repaired the

“transcript,” did so without having heard the tape himself. It would mean that he was altering the transcript for no reason, other than to remove the incriminating British col oquialisms from it.

Santil i, when questioned about the transcript, said, using the same excuse as that given by Shel , that the tape had been transcribed by a British secretary and she had changed the wording. It was a clumsy attempt to explain why common British terms were sprinkled through a statement al egedly made by an American. □ere would be no reason for a secretary to change the wording, even if some of the American slang made no sense to

her. It would also mean that Shel ’s claims of an exact transcript were false.

To put it kindly, he had been mistaken when he said otherwise.

From this “documentation,” we learned that the cameraman claimed he

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remembered very clearly that he had received a cal to go to White Sands.

On the statement, parenthetical y, it says Roswel . But Roswel is not the same as White Sands. □e missile range at White Sands was, and is, an Army facility, and it is nearly 150 miles from Roswel . If the cameraman was going to White Sands, why not y him to the Alamogordo Army Air Field, now

Hol oman Air Force Base, less than twenty miles away? □at part of the statement made no sense, unless it was an attempt to keep Roswel attached to the story for the commercial value of the Roswel name.

□e cameraman, apparently casual y, made a change in the scenario that

is quite signi cant. He said, “I was ordered to a crash site just southwest of Socorro.”

But Socorro isn’t to the northeast of White Sands, so the directions are wrong. And ying into Roswel stil makes no sense if the destination is

Socorro. Either Alamogordo or Albuquerque would make more sense and there were military facilities in both locations.

According to the cameraman, he returned to Washington, D.C., from one assignment. He was then given his orders and ew out of Andrews Army Air Field, onto Wright Field, and then on to the Roswel Army Air

Field. From Roswel , he was driven overland to the crash site, which, again, makes no sense logistical y.

To anyone who has studied a map of the United States or the Roswel

case, there is no reason to do this. Why y a cameraman from Washington

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to Dayton, Ohio, and then on to Roswel ? Even if they felt the need to land rst in Ohio, the trip into Roswel stil makes no sense. Why not y into Kirkland Air Force Base in Albuquerque or directly into Alamogordo? In 1947 there was no interstate highway system, but there was U.S. Highway 85.

A trip from either base to Socorro was easy and quick. Today a trip from Roswel to Socorro is stil long and difficult and even today it involves a long segment of two-lane highway that is barely wide enough for two cars to pass.

Where Did Santilli Get the Footage?

Under pressure to explain how he found the footage because there seemed to be some holes in his story, to put it kindly, Santil i provided a new scenario for the discovery of the lm. Kent Jeffrey, stil interested in the case, and stil trying to get to the bottom of the story, wrote in the MUFON

Journal, "… the person from whom he [Santil i] had purchased the Elvis footage was not real y a military cameraman a□er al . He now claimed that he had met the real cameraman a□er he purchased the rights to the Elvis lm from Bil Randle in Cleveland during the summer of 1992 (previously

Santil i had given the year as 1993)."

In the August 28, 1995, Channel 4 documentary, Santil i referred to a col ector of some sort who had put up the money for the autopsy footage.

He had said, repeatedly, that he, Santil i, did not have access to the lm itself because the col ector had it in a vault. It would be up to the col ector to offer samples of the lm for analysis. Santil i could do nothing to help researchers, which, of course, was another dodge and a new and different story about the footage.

Michael Hesemann, who was working with, if not for, Santil i, has told

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many that the alien autopsy footage is from a crash site near Socorro, New Mexico. Hesemann has claimed that he has located the “real” crash site and is the only researcher to have done so (though now, others say they have located it as wel , including American Ed Gehrman, who is absolutely convinced he has been to the “real” crash site). Hesemann has also claimed that the real date of this crash is May 31, 1947. Because this is not the Roswel case, Hesemann believes it explains the discrepancies between what researchers have learned about Roswel and the facts that have surfaced around the Santil i autopsy lm.

□e Tent Autopsy

□e whole story turned again in July 1998. Philip Mantle, working with

Tim Matthews, alerted their col eagues in the UFO eld that the tent footage was faked. □ey had found and interviewed one man who claimed to have

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worked on that segment of the autopsy footage. He had explained the situation to Mantle and Matthews.

According to Mantle, Matthews learned that the tent footage had been

created by a rm in Milton Keynes cal ed A.R.K. Music Ltd. □ose who put

the tent footage together had experience with video and computer equipment. Mantle and Matthews named the names of those men involved.

In December 1998 the situation became even more complicated, if possible. Santil i, learning that Bob Kiviat, who had produced the original autopsy special in the United States for FOX, was now producing a second in which he would show the tent footage was a fake. □e spin began again.

Philip Mantle (le□) with Spyros Melaris.

According to Santil i, the tent footage was not part of the original alien autopsy lm. According to what Santil i was now saying, he had maintained this position al along and had warned Kiviat in 1995 the tent footage was awed. Santil i claimed that Kiviat was going to run a disclaimer about the tent footage, but in the end, Santil i claims he won and the tent footage was pul ed from the broadcast. Of course, it is possible it wasn’t used because the footage was of such poor quality, dark to the point of being obscured, that it made no sense to broadcast it although such footage, even in that rough shape, would be of signi cant historical value. □at is, if it could be validated, it would be a valuable historical document even in its poor shape, but that just didn’t happen.

According to one version of how the tent footage came to be, it was original y part of the material that Santil i had received from the cameraman but because it was so bad, he had asked a studio in

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Milton Keynes to do what they could to enhance the image. Sometime a□er he had received the

enhanced image, he returned to the United States to show it to the cameraman. At that point the cameraman said that he didn't remember photographing the tent footage or the style in which it had been lmed.

□is, of course, makes no sense because if the cameraman hadn't photographed it, where did it originate? Even if the "re-created" footage was just that, a re-creation, then the cameraman might have wondered about the authenticity, but he would have remembered photographing it.

When Santil i returned to England, he learned that his friend and the owner of the studio had played a joke on him. □ey had been unable to retrieve anything from the lm so he, the studio owner, had staged it as a joke. Santil i, then, not to compromise the importance of the "real" autopsy lm, told al that the tent footage should not be used as part of any documentary that included the other autopsy lm.

But Santil i went on to say some things that are extremely important. He said that Andy and Keith (one of the men who worked at the studio owned

by Andy) were good friends of his. □ey didn't act out of malice, but just to play a joke on their friend. □is statement, however, shows that Santil i did know people who could fake the lm, and in fact, had faked some of it.

□e "Real" Autopsy Footage

Mantle, having revealed that the tent footage of the autopsy had been

"recreated" as a joke, now learned more disturbing things about the rest of the lm. What would be the nal nail in the alien autopsy coffin had been found. Mantle sent out an Internet alert to various UFO researchers that said:

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□e show starts off with Santil i claiming that he saw the real lm of aliens and that he purchased it from a former U.S. military cameraman. However, there is now a change in the story. Santil i & his col eague Gary Shoe eld claim that it took 2 years to buy the lm & that when it nal y arrived in London 95% of it had “oxidised” and the remaining 5% was in very poor condition.

□ey therefore decided to “reconstruct” it based on Santil i’s recol ection and a few frames that were le□. To do this they hired UK sculptor John Humphreys.

Humphreys tel s of how he used sheep’s brain for the brain and lamb’s leg for the leg joint.

□e cameraman’s interview lm is also a fake. □e man in the lm is someone they literal y brought in off the street and gave him a prepared script to read from.

Santil i and Shoe eld continual y try to insist that the AA lm as we know it is a restoration, but in fact it was made by John Humphreys.

To try and justify they claim that some of the surviving original frames are seen mixed in with the reconstruction/restoration. Interestingly neither Santil i, Shoe eld, or Humphreys could point out where and which are these frames when viewing the AA lm.

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Humphreys' model alien, showing the head in detail.

Santil i admitted that the six- ngered panels in the debris lm were the result of "artistic license" and he even produced one of the I-beams from the boot of his car. □e debris lm was also made by John Humphreys.

In fact, Humphreys is the surgeon in the lm, and a former employee of Shoe eld's in behind the window. He's Gareth Watson, a man I met several times in Ray's office.

Nick Pope and myself appear brie y in this show and I dare say Nick wil have his own comments to make.

For anyone interested in the AA lm I do recommend watching this if you can.

I've taken part in another show for Channel Five in the UK the content of which I am not permitted to disclose.

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A□er watching this tonight I can honestly say that I do not believe one word of either Santil i or Shoe eld and I have no doubt that the lm is nothing more than a complete fake.

□ere is and never was any original lm and there is and never was any US

military cameraman. Santil i & Shoe eld had little credibility as it was but now they have none.

□e alien autopsy lm is dead and I hope to put it to rest, once and for al , soon. Watch this space.

But the truth here seems to be something other than a joke. While Santil i was talking about the joke, another new voice, that of Spyros Melaris, was heard. Melaris had been involved from nearly the beginning, and he had seen the tent footage before almost anyone else. Mantle, in his book Roswel Alien Autopsy, laid it out in an interview that he conducted with Melaris.

Spyros Melaris and the Alien Autopsy

According to that interview, Melaris was an aspiring lmmaker in the mid-1990s, and as part of that plan, that is, to nd work as a lmmaker, he FAXed to a number of music producers and publishers his plan to be at the MIDEM music industry event in Cannes, France. One of those he FAXed

was Merlin Group owned by Santil i and it was one of the few that responded. Santil i planned to meet with Melaris in Cannes to discuss the possibility of making a documentary about that event or other music-related events.

By accident, Melaris ran into Santil i in a restaurant and at that rst meeting, Santil i mentioned the tent footage of that autopsy. Although Melaris didn’t think much of the tale, he was intrigued enough to agree to meet Santil i in London to see the footage. When he saw it, Melaris’ rst reaction was that it hadn’t been shot on lm but on videotape.

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Santil i seemed surprised that Melaris pointed that out so quickly, but then, remember, Reg Presley’s reaction was that it wasn’t lm but videotape.

Santil i realized that if Melaris spotted the aw that quickly, then everyone would be able to spot it just as quickly. □e tent footage would have to be abandoned.

Even this meeting is now wrapped in controversy, with those insisting

that the alien autopsy is real, claiming that Melaris didn’t meet Santil i until April 1995. Philip Mantle, as of May 9, 2012, said, “Spyros [Melaris] met him

[Santil i] in February 1995 at a TV conference in France. Santil i, who has changed his story many times, says otherwise. □e alien autopsy story was in existence long before this. I was contacted by Santil i in 1993. □e tent footage was made in 1993.”

With that the February 1995 meeting ended, but Melaris wasn’t through

with either Santil i or the alien autopsy. □e idea intrigued him and he talked to a friend, John Humphreys, who was a sculptor who had done some TV and movie special effects. Together they discussed how to do the lm

right and with that Melaris went back to Santil i, and the idea of the autopsy moved from the tent to a hospital in Fort Worth.

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Gary Shoefield (le□) and Ray Santilli—Philip Mantle

In his book, Mantle goes into detail about making the creatures.

According to what Melaris said:

John Humphreys of course made the alien's bodies. □e mould [sic] was actual y based on John's ten-year-old son who was quite tal . As a trained sculptor Humphreys had also studied anatomy so he was the man who played the surgeon in the lm in one of the contamination suits and he also played the soldier in the Debris Footage. Gareth Simmons, a col eague of Santil i's and Shoe eld's was the man in the surgical mask behind the glass….

According to Spyros the rst "Alien Autopsy" lm went pretty much as planned. However, upon completion Geraldine [Melaris' girlfriend at the time and not her real name] noticed that a few of the medical

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procedures were not correct. □ey therefore had to make another creature and lm another one

[autopsy]…. □e foam latex used to l the dummy had not worked right and an air bubble had le□ a hol ow space in the creature's leg. Humphreys was dispatched to the local butchers by Spyros to get a leg joint of a sheep. □is was inserted into the hol ow part in the alien's right leg, a few other things were

added, the outside of the leg was gently burnt with a blowtorch and hey presto, the leg wound.

Melaris also told Mantle, as outlined in his book, about the research that went into creating other aspects of the lm. Melaris' girlfriend, Geraldine, did the research to ensure that the props were from the proper time frame (even so far as communications with Kodak, in which they learned about

the coding system that was recycled every twenty years), and to the way the doctors moved around the alien creature. She made sure

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that the instruments used, and the “set decoration” such as the autopsy table, were al consistent with the proper period.

Spyros Melaris

Even with the research that had been conducted, even with the attention

to detail, there were other clues that this was a hoax. Some of it had nothing to do with the autopsy Spyros Melaris but can be seen as a sort of “signature.”

Something that I noticed when I saw the footage of the debris that was picked up on the crash site. □ere was an English word visible on one of the I-beams.

In the interview published in IUR is a short segment cal ed “□e Wreckage and I-Beams.” Mantle explained:

Melaris created the “alien writing” from Greek lettering, ancient Egyptian stylizing, and his own artistic license. (Humphreys then manufactured the wreckage.) □e writing on the main large beam, if translated correctly, reads

“Freedom.” He thought this a tting name for an alien spacecra□. While designing the letters that spel Freedom, Melaris noticed that if the word is turned upside down, the word “Video” could be discerned. He adjusted some of the letters to better facilitate this reading, so the piece would throw a little red herring into the mix.

It would seem to me that the appearance of an English word, one referring to the medium that would tel the world of the nd, is too big a coincidence. Would anything in an alien language and using alien writing show an English word, especial y one that suggested video?

□ose who believe that the alien autopsy is real reject this clue. In an email dated May 5, 2012, one of those wrote that “there isn’t a ‘VIDEO’

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although it may seem like that at rst and there is a resemblance.”

Of course it is more than just a resemblance. □e word is embedded on

one of the I-beams, and although the characters are quite stylized, it does say, “Video.”

□ere were plenty of other clues to suggest the whole thing was a hoax.

□e classi cation markings on the lm canisters disappeared a□er they were criticized as belonging to Hol ywood rather than the American military. □e cameraman, who was crucial to lm, was never identi ed, and years later Santil i would say that he had invented the name that had been “leaked” to UFO researchers.

But the biggest problem is that Santil i would never submit the lm for

proper scienti c analysis. Kodak had said they would be happy to date the lm if they were given a segment with the alien on it. Santil i was understandably reluctant, given the nature of the lm, but if Kodak could verify the age of the lm, it would become that much more valuable. Of course, if they found it to be much younger than the 1947 date, then the value would evaporate.

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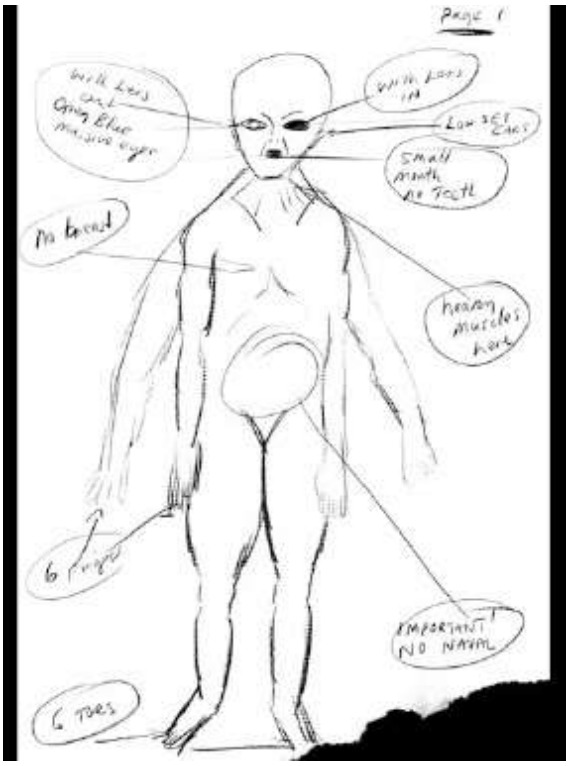

□is controversy should have ended years ago a□er British television exposed more of the hoax. Philip Mantle then sent a letter to his col eagues in the UFO community. □at letter said:

Tonight showed the SKY ONE TV show “Eamon Investigates— Alien

Autopsy.”

Philip Mantle

Front view drawing of the alien drawn by Spyros Melaris.

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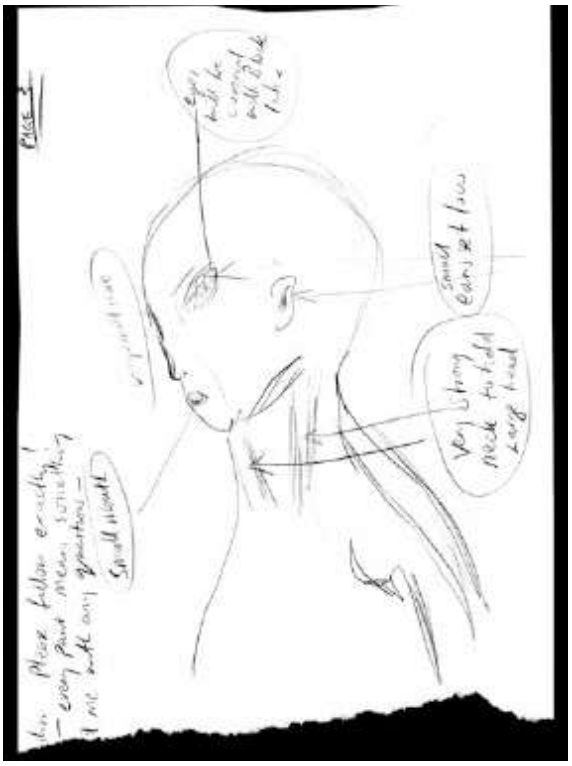

□e Arguments Continue

But it doesn’t put anything to rest because there are those who continue to believe there is something real hidden in the autopsy footage. □e sort of documentary that was done, with the objective goal of learning precisely what is known about the alien autopsy and who did what to bring it into the public arena, should have ended this.

To learn what some of those diehard advocates thought about al this, I

sent off a couple of inquiries. I had expected to see a tempering of the attitudes about the lm and maybe a little disappointment in what had been released, including the statements made by Santil i and Humphreys, but instead, I learned that they had rejected al that material and were again suggesting that a frame-by-frame analysis would prove that there was something credible about the alien autopsy story.

I emailed Ed Gehrman about these new details, including the

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admissions by Santil i about the “re-creations” of the hospital autopsy and that Santil i had never revealed who the cameraman was, and without that, there was no provenance for the lm.

Side view of the alien as drawn by Melaris.

In responding to these questions, Gehrman wrote:

Why is it up to me to prove the provenance of the footage. It isn’t possible until Ray decides to give out some lm for testing. But the testing wil only give the date the lm was produced, not when it was shot so there stil would be unanswered questions. Fox did al the research they thought was necessary on the lm. □ey talked to the cameraman, and were wil ing to accept his story.

□ey showed the footage to many special effects persons and pathologists and a host of other experts and al gave the footage their col ective OK. Philip Mantle was working side by side with Ray from 1994 on, and defended Ray al the way because he had seen another autopsy. I talked with Bob Kiviat the other day and he told me that there were layers of approval. Fox and others have never sued Ray for fraud. Ray has never changed his story about the cameraman. He has never admitted that he hoaxed anything.

He stated that some of the footage was destroyed so he “restored” some of the autopsy material. I believe he and crew probably tried to duplicate the footage but never succeeded.

When asked about the faked footage that now not only included that taken in the tent of the al eged original autopsy, but now most of the autopsy in the hospital morgue, Gehrman wrote:

□is is al explainable. □e cameraman gave Ray some fragments of lm and he took these fragments to some friends who he thought might be capable of connecting them together. □ese friends could n’t deal with the fragments but they didn’t tel Ray. □ey decided to make an alien autopsy of their own, which they did and the result was the “tent footage.” Have you ever seen this faked footage, beginning to end?

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It is nothing like the AA and is obviously a fake and it doesn't contain any information. One of the makers showed the model for the head of the alien which does indeed look like the creature's face.

How did they know what the creature looked like if they didn't have original footage to go by?

Ray's friends gave him the faked tent material, and told him it was the real thing, as a huge joke on Ray.

But they never told Ray the punch line. He thought it was real and began showing it to selected folks and Fox. He then showed it to the cameraman and

the cameraman told him it was fake and that Ray should not include it in the package. A□er that Ray stopped showing it, but some tapes had already been printed so some of the rst tapes, which I have, show the tent hoax footage but most don't. It shouldn't be included as criticism of the AA. It's a red herring and eventual dead end. □e main joker has admitted, in a letter to Ray that he was total y responsible, and Ray was simply the butt of a bad and misleading joke.

Now, those supporting the lm as authentic have added a new twist, which is that some real autopsy footage is mixed in with the faked. □ey have found, according to them, six places they believe a jump or change in the lm can be detected and these lead to identi cation of the real autopsy footage.

Overlooking the fact that it would be nearly criminal to contaminate the real footage with faked because it would destroy the credibility of al the lm, why not just release what is good. □ere are, according to Santil i and others, about four minutes of the real footage le□. □ere is no need to mix in anything, no reason to create new footage to expand the running time to twenty minutes, no reason to fake anything. □ose four minutes, if authenticated, would be nearly priceless. Now, if they truly exist, they are worthless.

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But there is another aspect to this. Melaris said that his girlfriend, as they reviewed the lm, noticed that some of the medical procedures were not quite right. Melaris decided to reshoot some of the footage and to do that, he needed to create a second creature. When the supporters of the autopsy suggest that there are hints of more lm, possibly a second creature, and of some slight changes from the faked footage to the “real,” we now know why.

□ere are two lms that were shot. It was necessary to reshoot some of it for “accuracy’s” sake. Not real footage of an autopsy of an alien creature, but two separate faked lms put together to extend the length of the footage.

□is explains the subtle changes that some of the autopsy researchers have noticed.

□e Last Hurrah of the True Believer

And as noted, the real problem is the lack of a provenance, and that provenance would be the cameraman. I suggested there was no cameraman,

and Gehrman wrote:

I believe I know the name of the cameraman. We contacted his second wife before she died but she didn’t con rm anything, except he was a cameraman during the war. I have his death certi cate and an application for SS. He was active in the US Army until 1945 and then worked for the US armed forces as a private contractor for ten years from 1945-1955. I have smal samples of his hand writing and printing and his numbers and they seem to match the writing on the lm canisters.

I’m not giving out his name just now. He died in August of 95 right a□er Ray sealed the Fox contract, but before the TV showing. Ray is protecting his family and I’ve decided to do the same.

In the end, we are le□ right where we had begun. Gehrman cannot supply the cameraman’s name, though he believed he knows it. He

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didn’t talk to the cameraman, but to his widow, who denied knowing anything about it. □ere might be a son to give us information, but we don’t know

that, so we are le□ with the word of Ray Santil i that the cameraman exists.

□e case comes down to this. □ere is no provenance for the lm because Ray Santil i has effectively blocked al attempts to provide it. □e lm itself has not been independently tested with the results veri ed by another lab. Kodak demanded, and rightly so, footage with the alien on it.

□ey could have dated the lm if al owed to test it.

Santil i said that the tent footage was faked. He said that most of the hospital morgue footage was faked, the men who created the lms and the

creatures, Humphreys and Melaris, have explained how they did it and why.

□e debris footage contains an English word, and again we’re told how that happened.

Yet we are supposed to believe that there is some “real” footage sandwiched in with al that which is faked. But why even consider that now that nearly everyone involved in the promotion of the alien autopsy has come out to explain it was faked. □ere is no reason to consider this real and

many UFO researchers are surprised that anyone stil thinks there is anything of value on the lm.

But the stories told by Ray Santil i do have one advantage, at least for him. People stil believe and people are stil wil ing to part with their cash to see the lm or buy copies of it, and while it is stil producing money, Santil i wil continue to spin the story.

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Beginning in the late 1940s, there were many other tales of alien bodies recovered at the site of spacecra crashes. e rst of these to gain widespread recognition, at least in the minds of some, is associated with an al eged crash near Aztec, New Mexico, on March 25, 1948. e basic information was provided publicly by Frank Scul y who was a columnist for Weekly Variety, a tabloid devoted to Hol ywood news and not known for its hard-hitting journalism.

In his rst article, published on October 12, 1949, Scul y wrote about a crashed saucer in the Mojave Desert with information of a second, smashed disc found in the Sahara. Neither of these two crashes would be explored in detail and the locations of the crashes would be changed in later accounts.

Or it might be said that the number of crashes was expanded from there.

According to Scul y's article, "e one that landed in Africa was more

cracked than a psychiatrist." Scul y claimed there had been sixteen men inside the saucer and no women, al smal , "about the size of Singer Midgets.

ey weren't Singer Midgets because al these have been accounted for.

Neither were they pigmies [sic] from the African jungle."

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Scul y reported that the interior of the saucer was loaded with pushbuttons and control instruments but that no one, a□er they entered the cra□, had wanted to push anything for fear of blowing themselves up. He also said they had bombarded the ship with cosmic rays and Geiger devices to make sure there was nothing lethal hidden inside, though, of course, the

Geiger counter measures radiation but doesn’t produce it, which suggests something about Scul y’s scienti c knowledge.

About a year later, Scul y would publish Behind the Flying Saucers which greatly expanded on this story and a couple of other columns he had written about UFOs. His focus in the book was the ying saucer crash near tiny Aztec, New Mexico, in March 1948. He also mentioned two other crashes

that had taken place in Arizona including one in Paradise Val ey. □ere was little or nothing about the Mojave Desert or the Sahara crash.

Welcome sign outside of Aztec, New Mexico.

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According to Scul y's sources, one of which was later identi ed as Silas Newton, and according to Newton's sources, one of which was a man later

identi ed only as "Dr. Gee," three radar stations, including an experimental site situated on a mountaintop, spotted one of the saucers traveling at eighteen thousand miles per hour at about ninety thousand feet. □e experimental radars were equipped with a high-power beam that, according to these sources, interfered with the power generation of the cra□, knocking it down.

Because there were three radars involved in the sighting, they could triangulate the position of the crash and the military was quickly dispatched for the retrieval. According to Scul y and his sources, they spent two days observing the cra□ before they ventured close to it. Inside they could see the bodies of the ight crew. Probing with a long stick through a smal hole in a porthole, they hit a button or knob or a switch that activated a hatch, opening the cra□.

□e bodies, al sixteen of them as Scul y had noted in his October 1949

column, were laid out on the ground. □ey were between three and three

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and a half feet tal (thirty-six to forty-two inches), had dark brown skin, were perfectly normal, meaning they were wel -proportioned humans except for their smal size, and were wearing old-fashioned clothes made of some strange cloth that was nearly indestructible.

Abandoned radar site in New Mexico.

□e cra□ and the bodies were taken to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

□e bodies, or at least some of them, were dissected and were found to be human in every way, except they al had perfect teeth. When the study was completed, some sources suggested that the bodies were buried, but it is unlikely that they would dispose of what could be thought of as unique biological specimens in such a cavalier fashion. □at means they would be stored for further research.

Scul y said that he had been able to examine some of the material recovered, which suggests in the world today that he might have been in on the hoax from the beginning. He said he had seen a “tubeless” radio and some smal gears that belonged to either Newton or Dr. Gee. Scul y said that the metal had been extensively tested by undisclosed laboratories, but no one had been able to identify the material, or rather that was what Scul y had been told by his source or sources.

Scul y was sure of his information and produced his book Behind the Flying Saucers, which was published in September 1950. Scul y may have been reluctant to name names in the beginning, but in 1950, Silas Newton gave a lecture at the University of Denver in which he discussed, to some extent, the Aztec UFO crash. □is lecture, according to the story, was Scul y’s attempt to learn the truth about UFOs and the crashes and the bodies, and to learn what the general public might believe about ying saucers. Because of the positive reaction there, he decided to go ahead with his book.

□e FBI and Aztec

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An outgrowth of that lecture, because of the publicity generated by it, was an internal FBI document dated March 22, 1950 from SAC Guy Hottel in Washington. He was sending the report on to the director of the FBI and

this concerned the ying saucers. Clearly, in 1950, there was stil an interest in the subject at the highest levels of the FBI and the March date means it was sent in prior to the publication of Behind the Flying Saucers but a□er the Denver lecture.

Hottel wrote, “An investigator for the Air Forces stated that three socal ed ying saucers had been recovered in New Mexico. □ey were described as being circular in shape with raised centers, approximately 50

feet in diameter. Each one was occupied by three bodies of human shape but only 3 feet tal , dressed in metal ic cloth of a very ne texture. Each body was bandaged in a manner similar to the blackout suits used by speed yers and test pilots.”

In the second paragraph, he wrote, “According to Mr. … information, the saucers were found in New Mexico due to the fact that the Government has a very high-powered radar set-up in that area and it is believed the radar interferes with the control ing mechanism.”

He ended the report by writing, “No further evaluation was attempted

by [redacted] concerning the above.”

It does seem odd that here is a report of three UFO crashes in which bodies were recovered, Hottel has the name of the man reporting this, and a suggestion that the Air Force is involved, but he is going to do nothing more with it. □is suggests that he knew that the information wasn’t very good but was passing along what he had heard anyway, which in this case was little more than rumor, and then he considered the matter closed.

□e story of the memo, at least as discovered by Karl P ock as he investigated the Aztec crash, was that story originated in the

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Wyandotte Echo, a newspaper in Kansas City, Kansas. □at information was provided by Rudy Fick, who said he learned of it from I. J. Van Horn and Jack Murphy,

who mentioned Coulter, who was in reality George Koehler. Koehler got his information from Silas Newton, and the circle is now complete.

In fact, Koehler's name surfaced early in the original investigations of the Denver lecture. J.P. Cahn wrote, in a 1952 exposé about the Aztec UFO

crash and Silas Newton in True, that "To test public receptivity to the saucer revelation, the oil man-geophysicist appeared as an anonymous guest lecturer before a University of Denver elementary-science class on March 8, 1950, escorted by George T. Koehler, who is a salesman for Denver radio station KMYR. □e lecturer told in detail of Dr. Gee's ndings and drew some blackboard diagrams. News of the lecture leaked, of course, beyond the cloistered wal s, and the how-come of university sponsorship raised a local tempest that blew off the lecturer's cloak of anonymity. His name was Silas M. Newton…. "

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suggestion that the Air Force is involved, but he is going to do nothing more with it.

In 1991, Wil iam E. Jones and Rebecca D. Minshal from the MidOhio

Research Associates published a preliminary study on their investigation

into the Aztec crash in general and the Denver lecture in particular. ey acknowledged Wil iam Steinman and his claims about Newton's Denver lecture that appeared in Steinman's book UFO Crash at Aztec. Jones and Minshal thought it would be a good idea to talk with Francis F. Broman who, according to the legend of this story, had been a science teacher at the University of Denver in 1950. It was to his class that this mysterious lecturer, Silas Newton, told of his involvement in the Aztec retrieval. In June 1991, they located Broman. ey wrote, "Mr. Broman essential y veri ed what Steinman had written about the incident. For the record, the class was entitled 'Science and Man.'"

ey went on to say that Broman was contacted by some sort of government official a er the class. He was never sure if it was the FBI or Army intel igence, he just didn't remember. He said the telephone interview took place within a couple of hours of the lecture and the cal er wanted to know what he and his col eagues thought of the information presented.

Broman said that he had found the presentation unconvincing, as did many of those who attended it.

With Scul y now convinced that the book would be taken seriously and

that people would be interested, he went ahead and nished it. It was published in September and was a hit, climbing the bestsel er list.

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With that sort of interest, several newspapers and magazines were interested in verifying the information contained in it. A□er al , if it could be proven that a ying saucer had crashed, it would be the biggest story of the last one thousand years. Dr. Gee believed that the doomed ight had originated on Venus. In 1950 no one knew that Venus had a surface temperature that could melt lead, which effectively ruled it out as a point of origin. Most thought of it as a planet covered with tropical oceans and islands, which accounted for the impenetrable cloud cover.

J. P. Cahn and the Aztec Crash

J. P. Cahn was commissioned by True, though some suggest he was on a freelance assignment without a formal promise of publication, to learn the whole story of Newton, Dr. Gee, and the Aztec crash. When the San Francisco Chronicle passed on the story, afraid of lawsuits, Cahn approached the editors of True. □is magazine had published much of what Major Donald Keyhoe had to say about ying saucers, and now, according to Cahn, he was assigned to learn what he could about Scul y's claims, the ying saucer crash landing, and the mystery men Scul y cited as his sources.

Cahn lost no time in beginning his investigation into Scul y, Newton, Dr.

Gee, and the ying saucer crash outside Aztec.

□e rst thing that came out was that Newton's background was not as

pristine as he had suggested. He had boasted that he had rediscovered the Rangely Oil Fields in Colorado, but others said that simply wasn't true.

Colorado oilmen said that there was no evidence for this claim. Both Newton and the mysterious Dr. Gee, in the guise of Leo GeBauer, would eventual y be convicted of fraud in some kind of scam that involved a device to locate oil and the rediscovery of the elds. Al of this came about a□er Scul y's book and Cahn's exposé were

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published and might be irrelevant here except as a testament to the character of the men involved.

But to be fair, it seems that Newton's background wasn't entirely disreputable. Newton apparently held an undergraduate degree in geology and he attended both Baylor and Yale. It seems that he held some sort of two-year degree from Baylor and he was a graduate of Yale. In the early twentieth century, having any degree was important and Newton apparently not only had a degree but one from an Ivy League school.

He also was apparently an accomplished golfer. According to Frank Warren, and according to several period newspapers, Newton won a number of tournaments, including the 1918 Virginia State Amateur Golf Championship. Later he seemed to have won a number of championships in

Colorado.

ere are suggestions that Newton was a multimil ionaire before he got

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caught up in the Aztec story. Again, according to Frank Warren and to an article published by the Associated Press on October 31, 1930, Newton's net worth was something like forty mil ion dol ars. □ere is no con rmation of the wealth other than Newton's claim and the newspaper article.

Newton, in a letter to Frank Scul y on July 2, 1951, wrote that "I've made and lost mil ions in the oil business and I've been in it most of my life…. I've been broke, but I can go back and to any place I've ever been and I think I'm welcome…."

But not al the references for Newton were as good. In 1955, Newton was

in court for sel ing □een thousand dol ars of worthless securities in Utah.

In 1958, he was again in court that involved one hundred thousand dol ars and two others. In fact, some information suggested that Newton was in legal trouble as early as 1928 and when he died in 1972 had an estate of just sixteen thousand dol ars, though others suggest it was no more than twelve thousand. He had debts that totaled more than $1.3 mil ion, according to probate records.

Frank Scully

Cahn, trying to nd the truth of the story, eventual y arranged a meeting with the seemingly reluctant Newton and told him that he, Cahn, was authorized to pay up to thirty- ve thousand dol ars for the story of the UFO

crash and al its ancil ary components, providing that Newton could prove his claims. Newton then showed Cahn some photographs and several smal

discs or gears that Newton claimed were of some mystery metal that came

from the recovered ying saucer.

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Cahn, of course, wanted one of the discs for independent analysis but

Newton was reluctant to let any of them go. If this was truly metal from an alien spaceship, then Newton might have trouble getting more, so his reluctance is understandable. He said he would provide documentation to

prove they were pure but he wouldn’t al ow Cahn to have one for independent testing. □is is usual y a sign that there is something wrong.

Cahn had several smal discs made, based on his memory of what those

held by Newton looked like. Cahn gured that at some point he might have the opportunity to switch one of his discs with one of those belonging to Newton. To age them properly, he carried them around in his pocket so that when, during one of their meetings Newton displayed the discs again, Cahn was ready. However, he was horri ed to see that none of his fakes looked much like those Newton had. His were thinner and lighter and smal er. He used the heaviest, the one that resembled Newton’s discs the most, to make a switch. Newton noticed nothing and wrapped up Cahn’s fake with the others and put them back in his pocket.

GeBauer admitted to Cahn that he was the mysterious Dr. Gee, though

Scully would suggest that Dr. Gee was a composite of eight men.

Cahn took the disc to Stanford laboratories for analysis. □ey found it to be rather poor grade aluminum that contained no traces of anything they

couldn’t identify and instead of withstanding temperatures up to 10,000

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degrees as Newton claimed, it melted at 650 (F) degrees. Lead melts around 800 (F) degrees so if the object came from Venus, it would have been molten just sitting on the surface of the planet.

But now, in a new book, □e Aztec Incident by Scott and Suzanne Ramsey, this switch of tiny discs is retold. According to them, Newton suspected that something like that might happen and that he didn't trust everything Cahn had been saying. Newton created some fake discs of poor-quality metal so that when Cahn made the switch—stole in both the words

of Cahn and the Ramseys— Cahn was taking a fake. □e point was to cost

Cahn some money by having him test a fake sample.

Cahn was also able to learn the identity of Dr. Gee to his satisfaction (and apparently by accident). He was checking the telephone cal s made by Newton and noticed that many went to Leo GeBauer in Arizona. Dr. Gee,

according to the tale, had been a chief research scientist during the Second World War and had studyied magnetism with an eye to defeating some of

the enemy's detection capabilities. It was also thought that by masking the magnetic signature of ships, some mines that used magnetism as a fusing device would be rendered useless.

More research found that GeBauer had a degree in electrical engineering

from Louis Institute of Technology in Chicago, but he had never been in charge of 1,700 scientists as claimed by Scul y in his book. In fact, while GeBauer was supposed to be running these highly classi ed projects for the U.S. government, he was actual y working in AiResearch where he was responsible for keeping the lab machinery working. It other words, he wasn't much more than a glori ed

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maintenance man who happened to have a degree in electrical engineering.

GeBauer admitted to Cahn that he was the mysterious Dr. Gee, though

Scul y would suggest that Dr. Gee was a composite of eight men. Other investigators would repeat that claim. □ere was no single person who was Dr. Gee. He was a composite. Not that it matters. GeBauer later tried to retract his statement about being Dr. Gee.

□e Ramseys also suggest that GeBauer never admitted to this. □ey publish a letter by GeBauer in which he denies the claim. In a “To Whom It May Concern” letter that is undated, GeBauer wrote, “I have been asked by J.

P. Cahn of the San Francisco Chronicle if I were the Dr. Gee in Scul ys [sic]

book. I am making this statement to al concern: I am not the Dr. Gee mentioned in the book….”

Ignoring the letter and the subsequent denials, Cahn was satis ed that the story was a hoax, concocted by Newton and GeBauer and using the idea of alien technology to lend a note of science to their machinery. Cahn didn’t believe that Scul y was directly involved in the hoax, but he must have had some suspicion, especial y when the truth about Newton began to surface.

Reportedly, Scul y was annoyed when he learned that the story was a lie …

at least some suggested this later.

Scul y, however, published a piece just prior to the publication of the Cahn exposé and a□er he had received many negative reviews of his book.

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Not that the negativity mattered much because the book was a national bestsel er and Scul y claimed he was offered seventy- ve thousand dol ars for the lm rights. Scul y told the movie studio they'd need a lot more money because Dr. Gee had said he would not talk even if offered twenty

mil ion.

Which seems to contradict the claim that Dr. Gee is a composite of eight scientists. □ere were, in fact, many such contradictions in the various stories told by Newton and GeBauer, not that it mattered al that much. □e kil er blow was their convictions for fraud. If nothing else could stop the Aztec story, this could do it. Two of the principals were convicted of fraud in a federal court.

With that, nearly al reports of ying saucer crashes were rejected by UFO researchers as wel as nearly everyone else. □is one tale, that had given so much hope to researchers early on, had been jerked away and it affected UFO research for decades. No one was interested in tales of ying saucer crashes regardless of the source, regardless of the credibility, number of witnesses, or the quality of the evidence.

Robert Spencer Carr and the Aztec Crash

But this tale was not dead yet. At a press conference in 1974, a retired university professor, Robert Spencer Carr, claimed that he had talked to ve people who had inside knowledge of a ying saucer crash and he believed it to be the Aztec case. Carr refused to reveal his sources, but he did manage to intrigue the national press for a couple of weeks with his story.

As he told it, the facts matched those which Scul y had reported two and a half decades earlier. He did talk about the radar stations and the triangulation. He suggested the landing was a so□ one, on a triangular gear.

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Carr said law enforcement got there with guns drawn and approached the

thirty-foot-in-diameter ship. □rough a thumb-sized hole in the dome of the disc, they could see twelve little men slumped near their instruments.

Carr said the military and the scientists, who had arrived a□er the sheriff managed to open the door, removed the bodies. □ey were muscular and solid with light hair and blue eyes. □ey al wore the same clothes, which were some kind of blue uniform.

□ese bodies were taken to Edwards Air Force Base rather than to Wright-Patterson, but were later moved, along with their cra□, to Wright-Patterson. One of the bodies was dissected with surgeons own in from Washington, D.C. □eir blood type was “O.” Carr claimed to have received

the information from a nurse who was involved with the dissection and she said that she could think of no reason to take this story to her grave. She apparently did not explain the blood type.

Under pressure from the press and UFO researchers, Carr stil refused to name any names. He underscored that he had ve sources, but he was going to hold those names in con dence because he had promised to do so. At that point, for me and for many others, Carr’s tale moved into the realm of fantasy. □ere was no way to verify anything that Carr said, and he was repeating, to some extent, the Scul y tale which we al believed to have been discredited Len Stxing□eld. and without the names of the sources or some other clues, there was nothing more to be done.

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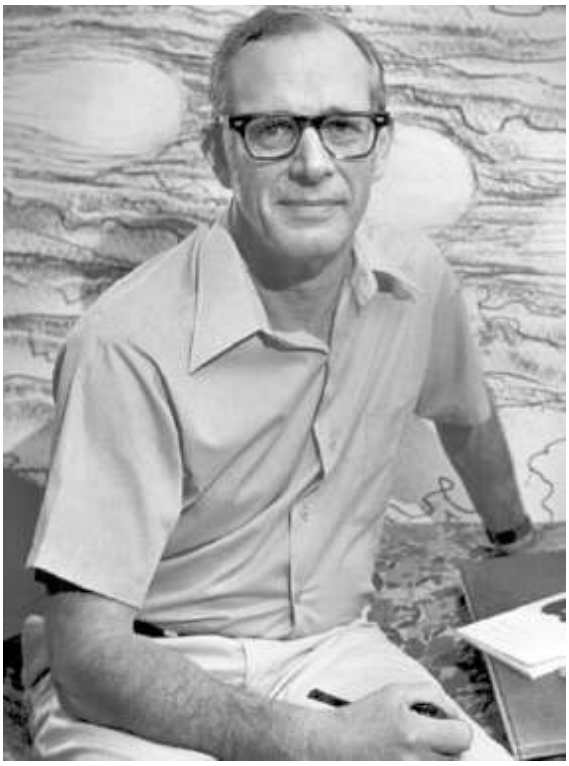

Len Stringfield.

Len String eld, who reopened the research into what he termed

Crash/Retrievals, talked to Carr privately. According to what String eld would later say, Carr did reveal the names and String eld said he knew the names too. String- eld would not reveal the names either, but String eld's comments carried a great deal of weight with those inside the UFO

community. Where Carr would be dismissed because of the con dentiality

and his lack of standing inside UFO research, String eld would be believed because of his credibility.

In 1975 Mike McClel and wrote an article for Official UFO claiming that

"□e UFO Crash of 1948 is a Hoax." He provided a look at both Carr's new

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story and Scul y's old and found they were general y similar but had some sharp disagreements.

McClel and also wrote that he had interviewed several "highly reliable

'old-timers' from Aztec, including Deputy Sheriff Bruce Sul ivan, who would have been in high school at the time of the UFO crash. According to McClel and, "He has lived in Aztec al his life and 'never knew or heard anything about it.'"

Coral Lorenzen, who had founded APRO, talked to Sul ivan a□er the Carr story broke in the newspapers in 1975. Sul ivan told her that he had deputies out combing the area for any information that would prove or disprove Carr's claims. Sul ivan told Lorenzen, "Nothing has been found."

McClel and also interviewed Lyle McWil iams, who had been in

business in Aztec his whole life and was thirty-two in 1948. According to McClel and, "He recal s nothing of the incident except for the original claim and has always treated it as a joke."

□at testimony is interesting because McWil iams does remember the rst story to appear in Scul y's book, and that was only about a year or two a□er the crash. Surely, had something happened, McWil iams would have known about it at the time.

McClel and interviewed Marguerite Knowlton who lived near Hart

Canyon since 1946. Hart Canyon is where the UFO came down, but according to her, nothing happened near the canyon, and that would include heavy equipment brought in to create the roads and remove the crashed cra□. She did suggest that McClel and talk to George Bowra, who owned the Aztec newspaper in 1948.

McClel and interviewed Bowra, who said that he had not carried

anything in the newspaper about the event in 1948. He had, however, done an article that suggested he had been abducted by aliens. It

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was done tongue-in-cheek and wasn't meant to be believed.

McClel and concluded—based on the work he had done, the people he

had interviewed, and the reactions of most to his questions—that nothing had happened. □ey were aware of Aztec's brush with UFO crashes, but they believed it had al come from the book by Scul y rather than any rsthand knowledge. It was something stuck in the folklore of the town, but it wasn't something that had happened.

Wil iam Steinman,

Wendel e Stevens, and Aztec

And while this seemed to end the questions for a while, it certainly wasn't the end of the Aztec story. In 1986, Wil iam Steinman along with Wendel e Stevens published UFO Crash at Aztec. □e Aztec story was revitalized once again, with the claims of new witnesses, new information, and better corroboration. But it was nothing more than a rehash of the information published by Scul y with injections of Steinman's personal investigation and escapades in Aztec.

Steinman's tale fol owed that given by Scul y in which the cra□ had been tracked by three radars and the downed cra□ was located outside of Aztec, New Mexico. □e scienti c team, backed up by members of the military, checked the cra□, but could nd no seams or rivets or cracks. It looked as if it was something that had been cast in one solid piece.

Unable to nd any sign of a door or hatch, they used a hammer to break

through the glass of a porthole and then used a long pole to push buttons on a control panel. □is opened a door and al owed the scientists entry into the cra□.

Eventual y al the bodies were removed and taken away for study elsewhere. □e cra□ was also removed for study. Steinman,

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enamored with

the mythical MJ-12 committee, put the names of these men into the story, explaining what their roles were, or rather, might have been back in 1948.

Unfortunately, before Steinman begin his research, al those identi ed as members of MJ-12 had died.

Steinman did travel to Aztec to conduct a search. A□er he made a stop at the newspaper and searched through the back issues from February to June 1948, which yielded nothing, he drove around the town. He found a sign advertising a garage sale and being something of a “garage sale fanatic”

according to him, he stopped by. Here was his rst break because when he mentioned the UFO crash to Vivian Melton, she told him that she knew about it and she knew where it had happened.

While this was an interesting lead, and with Harvey Melton, Vivian’s husband, helping, Steinman was able to nd the crash site. □e problem here is that the Meltons didn’t arrive in Aztec until 1972, so they had seen nothing themselves. □ey were, at best, secondhand witnesses to the crash.

□rough the Meltons, Steinman also interviewed a man Steinman

identi es only as W. M. Although Steinman in the mid-1980s wrote that W.M. had died, Jones and Minshal , in the early 1990s, were able to identify W. M. as Wright G. McEwen, who was stil alive. Steinman suggested that

McEwen had been a deputy sheriff in 1948 and had le□ town shortly a□er

the crash, apparently afraid for his life and of what he had seen.

Jones and Minshal learned that McEwen had in 1948 been a deputy, but

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he knew nothing of the UFO crash. His wife, who also lived in Aztec at the time, knew nothing about it and said that the town was smal and had something like that happened, they al would have known about it quickly.

Jones and Minshal interviewed Pat Melton, the daughter of Vivian and

Harvey. She said that Steinman had upset a lot of the people in Aztec with his aggressive style of interview. You might say it was more like an interrogation. And he put words into people's mouths about the events. He made a "lot of speculative assumptions," according to Pat Melton. She said that many in Aztec did not like his approach to the investigation or his conclusions drawn from it.

Another of those who had been around Aztec in 1948 was Henry

Knowlton, and he believed he had once owned the land where the crash is

said to have happened. He bought it in the 1950s from Harold Dunning and later sold it to Rowland Chaffee. When Jones and Minshal asked him about the UFO crash, he said the story had been around for a long time, he didn't know how it started, but it wasn't true.

What this tel s us is that Steinman's view of the Aztec crash is badly skewed by his enthusiasm for the tale, his inability to separate fact from fantasy, and his hearing one thing from the locals and turning it into something else.

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Aztec slab and concrete slab that was allegedly poured to support the crane to remove the saucer. □ey are important only because they are there, and

Ramsey has attempted to test them so he can date them … so far the tests have not been completed.

Using Steinman's own words, this can be demonstrated. On page 256 of his book, he wrote, "I went and confronted Mr. W. M. at his farm on 8 July 1982. □ere, I introduced myself and immediately asked the question: 'What can you tel me concerning the crash and recovery of a ying disc by the U.S.

Military out in Hart Canyon in 1948?'"

According to Steinman, "W.M. got down off his tractor and

straightening himself up, stated, very bel igerantly [sic], 'Nothing happened out in Hart Canyon in 1948!! Why do you people from so

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far away keep asking about that ying saucer crash?'"

On that same day, which would be July 8, Steinman "confronted" Mr. H.

D. who was Harold Dunning, and who owned the land back in 1948. When

he asked about the UFO crash, Dunning apparently snapped, "I don't know

anything about what you are talking about—now leave me alone!!"

Steinman wrote, "I Sensed [sic] a tenseness and nervousness in his voice, almost as if he were at one time coerced and coached into answering in that way."

Of course another way to look at it is that Dunning, an eighty-three-year-old man when Steinman was there, was tired of repeated inquiries into something that had not happened. He was tired of being asked the same things and snapped, not because he had been coached, as Steinman speculated, but because he didn't like being interrupted for nonsense.

Steinman added nothing of consequence to the Aztec tale, other than his

wild speculations and relatively poorly researched conclusions. Some of what he wrote is obviously in error and the rest is not based on solid ground.

Al he did was keep the Aztec story alive a little longer until others had a chance to review his work and his conclusions.

And once again the Aztec case went dormant. If it was mentioned at al ,

it was as a hoax perpetrated by Newton and GeBauer and aided by Scul y,

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though he was o□en characterized as the innocent dupe of the two con men.

Scott and Suzanne Ramsey

and the New Investigation

But rumors began to circulate that another investigation, one that had lasted more than twenty years, had uncovered spectacular new information and that Aztec was not a hoax. □is new information would convince many of

the reality of the crash and we al just had to wait until the information was properly organized and then published.

It was Scott and Suzanne Ramsey who had conducted the lion’s share of

the research, but they were aided by Frank Warren and Dr. Frank □ayer,

and al four are mentioned on the cover of the book. □is would break the case wide open with better evidence. And, at rst, it looked as if it might.

In the very rst chapter there is a discussion of Doug Noland, a longtime resident of Aztec who made a name for himself in other arenas but eventual y moved to Arizona. Noland was quoted heavily, but the taped interview was conducted by someone named Randy and Scott Ramsey didn’t know who this Randy was.

Ramsey said the tape came to him from John Lear, but Lear didn’t remember who Randy was, though Lear was also at the interview, now characterized as more of a conversation than an interview. Although he didn’t tape it, Ramsey did interview Noland before Noland died, and he did take notes.

Noland talked about how he and Bil Ferguson had ended up in Hart Canyon on March 25, 1948. □ey arrived a□er a number of the locals

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and

some police, but before the military could get there to take over. Noland said that they crawled al over the object until they found a smal hole in one of the portholes. According to Noland, as reported by Ramsey, “Bil , who was ignoring the orders to stay away from the cra□, was trying to poke around the cra□ with a re-pole or something he pul ed off one of the trucks. Soon he hit some damn thing, and a door or walkway appeared. Some of us had to look inside and see what the hel else was in there…. “

Scott Ramsey

But Scul y, whose authority was the mysterious Dr. Gee, wrote, “When

we arrived on the ground they decided the best thing to do was not to touch it or try to get into it. □ey studied the ship from a distance for a matter of two days…. “

Continuing with this tale, Scul y wrote that Dr. Gee said, “…we decided

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that it was probably safe…. Apparently, there was no door to what was unquestionably the cabin. □e outside surface showed no marking of any sort, except for a broken porthole…. Final y we took a large pole and rammed a hole through this defect in the ship…. We assumed that there must have been a door of some kind … so we prodded around with the pole

… on the opposite side from the broken porthole, we hit a knob, or a double knob … to our amazement and surprise, a door ew open."

□is statement from Scul y and attributed to Dr. Gee seems to contradict

the statement made by Doug Noland that his friend, on the scene for only a short period, used a pole to open the door. □ere is no way to reconcile these differences other than to say that when Noland was interviewed in the mid-1990s, the story told by Scul y and the Aztec case had been wel publicized. □ere had been two books and any number of newspaper and

magazine articles about it. Noland's testimony, such as it was, could have been contaminated.

Other witnesses offered are not much in the way of witnesses. □ere is Virgil Riggs who lived in the Aztec area and had seen the "armada" of UFOs over Farmington, New Mexico, in 1950. He had heard about the Aztec crash, but he had seen nothing himself. In fact, his father, who sometimes participated in discussions of the crash in an Aztec café, didn't believe that it had happened.

Riggs, however, as an Air Force-enlisted man stationed in England, met

another low-ranking enlisted man, Donald Bass, nicknamed "Sam," who claimed to have participated in part of the retrieval operation.

According to what Riggs told to Ramsey, Bass had been part of a guard

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detail at the Aztec site. He'd seen the bodies as they were loaded onto trucks and believed they had been taken to Ohio, apparently meaning Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

In an interesting little tidbit, Bass had said there had been a late snowstorm in the area. He was surprised to see the snow accumulate on the military vehicles, but it apparently didn't stick to the alien cra□. □is is the rst and only mention of snow at that time.

Ramsey, of course, wanted to talk to Bass. He was the guy who had seen

everything, but he had some difficulty tracing him. He eventual y had some luck in nding the family, only to learn that Bass had been kil ed in Vietnam by a hit-and-run driver.

A check of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial website was unable to con rm this. No one named Donald Bass was kil ed in Vietnam. No one named Bass had been kil ed while serving with the Air Force in Vietnam,

and no one named Bass had been kil ed by a hit-and-run driver while in Vietnam.

Of course that only means that the information that Ramsey obtained

from another source about the fate of the man is inaccurate, but says nothing about the overal story. It was second-hand, at best, and without corroboration from Bass it adds little to the overal case.

Solon Lemley Brown

According to Ramsey, Walter Sayre was the son of a deacon in a Baptist church. Solon Lemley Brown was the pastor. Brown was making the rounds

of various congregations in the Four Corners area (meaning Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah) and on one of his trips, in the early morning, came across the activities out near Hart Canyon.

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He was either asked to help, or fol owed the cars out to the canyon to see if he could help.

When he got to the top of the mesa, he saw the disc-shaped cra and

was approached by a police officer who told him there were bodies inside.

He was told that the military was coming and about al he could do was look inside. He saw two or three bodies slumped over their control panels or in their seats.

Before he could do much, or see much, the military arrived to take control. Brown didn't know if they were Air Force or Army. ey separated everyone into groups but Brown stood off to the side with the police officers.

He watched as the military men brought out some of the bodies.

In minutes, the man in charge of the military came over and told Brown

that what he had seen was of the highest military secret and he could never tel anyone what he had seen. Brown asked questions that were ignored.

Eventual y he le the mesa.

He returned to his church, but felt he had to con de in someone even

though he'd been told only hours earlier to say nothing. He selected one of the deacons of his church to con de in. at evening he told Bruce Sayre

and his son Walter what he had seen. Brown was so overcome with emotion

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as he related the story that tears streamed down his face. Walter Sayre remembered this because he'd never seen a man cry before.

Once again, the testimony is not from the witness, but from someone who heard the story from a witness. According to Ramsey, Sayre was sincere in what he described, and the scene seemed to have been emotional enough that it stuck in his mind.

□e problem is that Ramsey was able to locate Brown's son, Dr. Autrey

Brown, also a man of the cloth. Autrey Brown told Ramsey that he had

never heard the story from his father but did con rm that if his father had been sworn to secrecy, he would not have told his son about it. □is seems to contradict the fact that Brown told his deacon about the crash.

Brown did say that his father had been pastor in a church not al that far from Roswel and he believed that members of that congregation had mentioned something about the Roswel crash to him. Autrey Brown wondered if it wasn't possible that Walter Sayre had misunderstood what had been said about the location of the crash and the time frame in which it occurred.

□e End of Aztec?

□is is a case that simply wil not die. □ose who advocate it today suggest that we remove Scul y, Newton, and GeBauer from the equation and begin

looking at the new evidence that has been found. Ignore the fact that the reports originated in Scul y's Variety column and that the rst column was anything but serious … and ignore the fact that some of the crash locations shi□ed as the story evolved.

With al the research that has been carried out, it would seem that the

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evidence would be a little more convincing than it is. Realizing that the events took place more than a half-century ago and that many of the primary witnesses, if there were any, are long gone, it stil seems as if there is more to suggest hoax than reality.

□ere is one other aspect to this story. Karl P ock, who had been around

UFO research since the 1960s and who had been a member of the NICAP

Washington, D.C., committee, looked into the Aztec case.

According to P ock, he had located a copy of a personal diary that had

been kept by Silas Newton. He wasn't al owed to keep the original, wasn't al owed to make copies or even take the photographs, and he was a little bit leery of the source. But the lead was just too good to ignore.

P ock learned that Nick Redfern, a researcher who had been living in

Great Britain but who eventual y moved to the United States, had obtained a copy of Newton's FBI le and asked if he might get a copy. P ock had hoped there would be some samples of Newton's handwriting in the le that he could use to compare with the diary. Redfern said that P ock offered to pay the costs of copying and postage, so he had no reason to refuse. He sent P ock the copy.

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A sign commemorating the Aztec incident.

□ere were no samples of Newton's handwriting in the le, but P ock wrote later, "In November 1998, I obtained from Wil iam L. Moore a copy of Newton's holographic wil , which I took with me to what turned out to be my last meeting with my source. □e wil unquestionably is in Newton's hand, and while I'm certainly not a handwriting expert, the comparison le□

no doubt in my mind that he wrote the journal, too."

Ramsey, of course, had heard about this as wel and wanted to explore

this avenue. According to him, "Karl admitted during his videotaped lecture to the UFO Symposium in 2002 that he never knew who this secret person

was, how to contact him, or whether or not the diary was real. □e diary, Karl claimed, exposed Aztec as nothing more than Silas Newton pul ing off a hoax, and the only mystery was why the military

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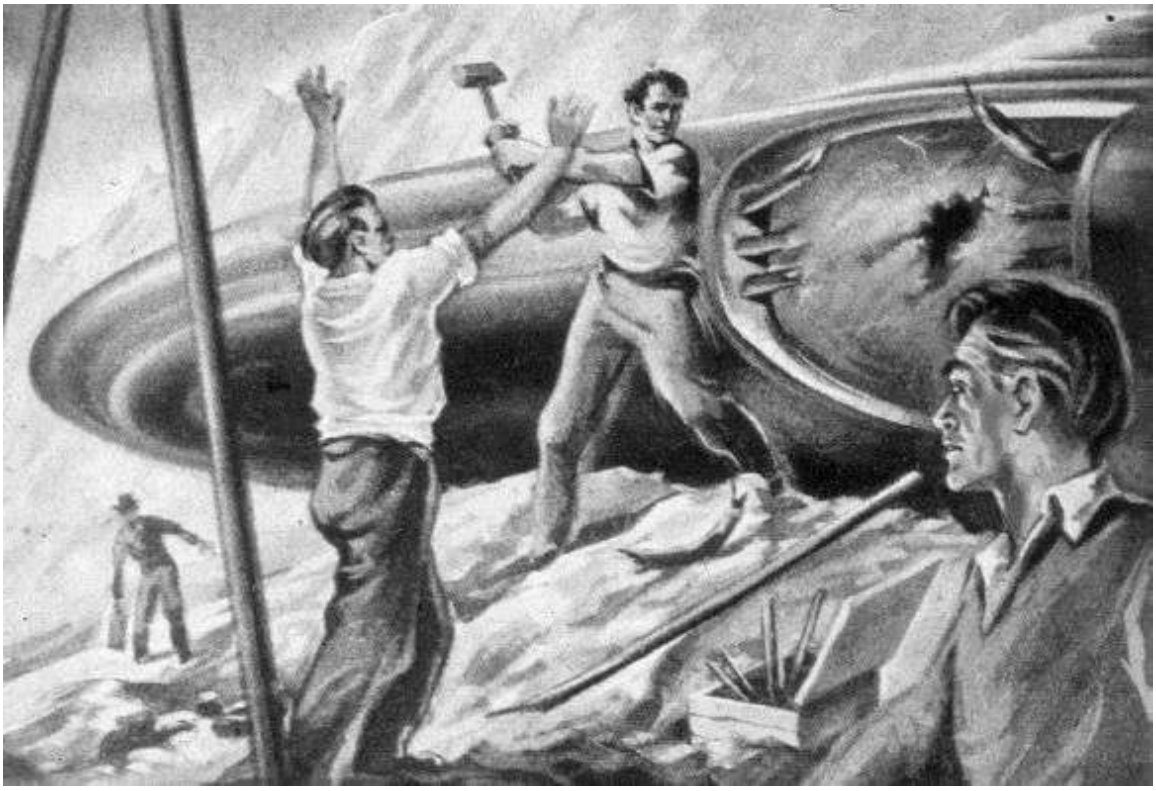
showed up at Newton's residence, tel ing him that they knew the Aztec story was 'bunk' but to keep up the good work."

According to Nick Redfern, in his book, Body Snatchers in the Desert, P ock, in a self-published paper, wrote about al this, saying:



In 1998, under curious circumstances, I was made privy to a fascinating document about one of the most controversial cases of the Golden Age of Flying Saucers, the so-cal ed Aztec crash of 1948. I had little more than a passing interest in the case until 1998, when a source, who insists on complete anonymity, showed me a handwritten testament, set down by the key player in this amazing, o□en amusing, truth-is-stranger-than- ction episode.

An artist's reconstruction of what the Aztec crash site based on Frank Scully's acocunt.

It seems that what I was shown was … something penned by sly old Silas Newton, but what can we say about the veracity of its content? A□er the Denver Post revealed he was Scientist X, Newton received

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two visitors at his Newton Oil Company office in Denver. □ese men claimed to be with a highly secret U.S. Government entity, which they refused to name…. Newton writes,

"□ey gril ed me, tried to poke holes in my story. Had no trouble doing it and laughed in my face about the scienti c mistakes I made. □ey never said so, but I could tel they were trying to nd out if I real y knew anything about ying saucers that had landed. Did not take those fel ows long to decide I did not. But I sure knew they did."…

Newton's visitors told him they knew he was pul ing a scam and then gave him what may have been the surprise of his life. "□ose fel ows said they wanted

me to keep it up, keep tel ing the ying saucer story and that they and the people they worked for would look out for me and for Leo. I could just go on doing what I always did and not worry about it.

Ramsey then explains that he questioned P ock on the "secret" source

and whether P ock had ever compared any of Newton's handwriting to the

diary. According to Ramsey, P ock said that he had been unable to nd any samples of Newton's handwriting. P ock, under questioning, said that the source was Newton's nephew, which, of course, doesn't exactly protect the man's identity since Newton didn't have al that many nephews. In fact, according to Ramsey, Newton had none.

Based on this exchange, Ramsey believes the tale of the diary to be a hoax, either concocted by P ock for unspeci ed reasons, or by someone else lying to P ock. Either way, this al eged diary does nothing to undermine the importance of the Aztec tale.

But al this doesn't quite track with other information. As noted, by 1998, P ock did have samples of Newton's handwriting. Nick Redfern added, "By 2001, Karl had several other extensive samples of

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Newton’s writing, and col ectively this material—he told me—matched the journal.”

Although Ramsey’s book discusses this episode brie y, and he notes that

although P ock had lived close to the Aztec area for many years and had

attended many of the symposiums, he thought it strange that P ock had never been to the crash site. He thinks it strange, but if P ock believed the story to be a hoax, then he would believe there is no crash site to visit. P ock apparently had no desire to walk around in the desert.

□e story of Aztec is certainly the story of conspiracy, but it seems that it was a conspiracy to invent a crash rather than to hide one. □e evidence is weak, the eyewitness testimony is shaky, and if P ock is to be believed, and there is no reason to doubt him, Newton admitted as much. It would seem

that there is little le□ to question … until the next researcher comes along and begins to turn over the soil one more time.

The Robertson Panel, which might be considered the rst attempt to

convince the public that there was nothing to the UFO phenomenon,

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had its beginnings in 1953 and was the result of a series of sightings over Washington, D.C., in July 1952. On two consecutive weekends, UFOs had

been seen over the capital by airline and military pilots, by people on the ground, and they had been picked up by multiple radar sets at both the civilian airports and the military bases. □ese sightings, known as the Washington Nationals because of the radar images seen by operators at the Washington National Airport, caught the attention of the president, who wanted to know what was going on. □ey also resulted in one of the greatest newspaper headlines ever. □e Cedar Rapids Gazette reported across the front page, “Saucers Swarm over Capital.”

One of the results of al the UFO sightings that summer was the creation of a panel of experts to examine the UFO phenomenon. □ese were men at

the top of their elds, whose names were recognized around the world, and who could be counted on to do a job. □e official name was □e Scienti c

Advisory Panel on Unidenti ed Flying Objects. It was better known as the Robertson Panel, named for its chairman Dr. Howard Robertson.

□e CIA, aware of the potential intel igence problem that was developing

because of UFO sightings, began a series of what they thought of as informal discussions about them. □ese were chaired by H. Marshal Chadwel , at the time the CIA’s Assistant Director of Scienti c Intel igence. Chadwel did go to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with Frederick Durant (who surfaces

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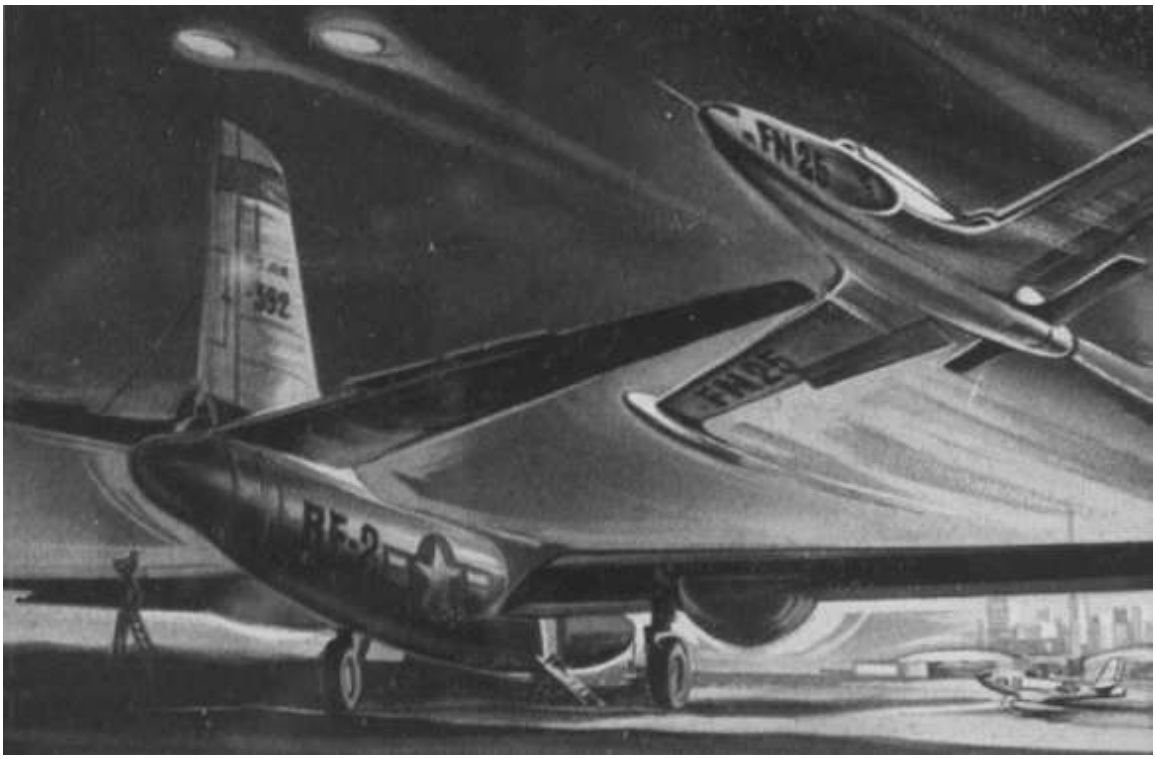

later on the Robertson Panel) for a series of brie ngs on UFOs by those investigating them.

In September 1952, Chadwel wrote to the Director, Central Intel igence

(DCI) tel ing him, “Recently an inquiry was conducted by the Office of Scienti c Intel igence to determine whether there are national security implications in the problem of ‘unidenti ed ying objects,’ i.e., ying saucers; whether adequate study and research is currently directed to this problem in its relation to such national security implications; and what further investigation and research should be instituted, by whom, and under what aegis.”

Planes scramble at Andrews Air Force Base a□er UFOs are seen over

Washington, D.C.

What this tel s us is that at the highest levels of the intel igence community, meaning here, the CIA, the director was being told about

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UFOs and a problem they could pose. Chadwel was suggesting that they needed to determine what should be done about this problem.

Chadwel , then, seems to answer the questions that he has posed. He wrote, “[P]ublic concern with the phenomena indicates that a fair portion of

our population is mental y conditioned to the acceptance of the incredible.

In this fact lies the potential for the touching-off of mass hysteria…. In order to minimize the risk of panic, a national policy should be established as to what should be told to the public regarding the phenomena.”

In other words, the public can’t be trusted to think for themselves, they are easily led, and that the men and women of the CIA should determine

how much of the truth they should be told. In fact, these are the same conclusions that would be reached by the Robertson Panel some ve months later.

But we real y need to understand this. □ose at the highest levels of the government, especial y those inside the intel igence community, determined that the public was not smart enough to be told the truth. □ey could be easily led, and it was up to the CIA to decide just what they “needed” to know, as opposed to what the whole truth might be.

Major Dewey Fournet, who was the Pentagon officer charged with the

UFO responsibility, said that he had received a cal from Frederick Durant.

According to Fournet, “[H]e asked me to make a presentation to the CIA

which I gave them a few of my own opinions based on what I had observed

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… from that the idea of the Robertson Panel spawned. And Fred, through

his superiors, convened it."

Wel , not exactly, according to the documented history. It can be argued that the idea of the panel already existed by the time Fournet made his presentation to the CIA and he was asked to make the presentation so that they could decide the direction to take. In December 1952, just weeks before the group actual y met, Chadwel decided to form the scienti c advisory panel. Dr. Michael Swords, who reviewed al this history careful y, said that Robertson had apparently accompanied Chadwel and Durant to Wright-Patterson. According to Swords, Robertson accepted the assignment against his better judgment, but Chadwel insisted. Robertson said that he had to

"strong-arm" four other scientists to join him in this al eged scienti c evaluation, which, of course, suggests a certain bias had already set in.

Swords, who reconstructed the history of this panel using documents from a variety of sources, including those housed at the J. Al en Hynek

Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS), the declassi ed Project Blue Book les now available online, and the les of the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena also housed at CUFOS, said, "□e rst guy who gets

to do this [meaning serve on the committee] is □ornton Page because Page is handy. Page turns out to be the junior member … but he doesn't know

anything about UFOs. Robertson sent him an article to read…. "

Swords said, "I think Alverez [Dr. Luis Alverez] is the next guy … and

Alverez comes in hostile.… Robertson has to get two more people.… I think Goudsmit [Dr. Samuel Goudsmit] is probably the last guy …

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and I’m not

sure when they talk Lloyd Berkner into [it]. Goudsmit is just incredibly hostile [to the idea that UFOs are anything other than hal ucination and hoax].”

From this it seems that the panel is not receptive to the idea of UFOs

being alien cra□, but then it isn’t necessary for them to enter the investigation as believers, as long as they are wil ing to look at the evidence.

But that doesn’t seem to be the case. □ey came into it with preconceived notions and they weren’t going to be convinced of anything else.

Dr. J. Al en Hynek, who was there (but as the Air Force consultant to Project Blue Book and not a member of the panel) would later tel Swords that the members of the panel entered the committee room with the idea

UFOs were going to be debunked from the absolute beginning. According to what Hynek told Swords, Alverez and Goudsmit were saying “nothing but

hostile things and Goudsmit is saying wiseass things…. Page is more open-minded and Berkner is not there.”

Captain Edward Ruppelt, who was the chief of Project Blue Book in 1952 and into 1953, described the Panel. In his book, □e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, he wrote, “When this high court was convened

… one of three verdicts would be acceptable. 1. Al UFO reports are explainable as known objects or natural phenomena; therefore the investigations should be permanently discontinued. 2. □e UFO reports do

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not contain enough data upon which to base a nal conclusion. Project Blue Book should be continued in the hopes of obtaining better data. 3. □e UFOs are interplanetary spacecra□.”

But the sad fact here is that the panel was a fait accompli before the rst meeting. According to the research carried out by Swords, not everyone was in on it. □e panel had been salted, not by skeptics, but by men who were hostile to the idea of alien visitation. □ey weren’t interested in determining if some UFOs might be alien, they only wanted to end the discussion about them in the public arena. To them, there was nothing more real to ying saucers than there was to the Easter Bunny and everyone should agree with their assessment.

Under the auspices of the CIA, the panel met for the rst time on January 14, 1953. According to Ruppelt, the rst two days were made up of his review of the work done by and the ndings of the various Air Force projects, that is, Sign, Grudge, and nal y Blue Book. Ruppelt reported that his team, and those who preceded him, had analyzed 1,593 reports and found explanations for al but 429. Con dence in those explanations ranged from known to possible, which meant they thought they knew what had caused a sighting but couldn’t prove it. □is also meant that nearly a third of the sightings had no explanation.

Swords had learned a little more about the exact chronology of events in the meetings during his discussions with Hynek. During the rst half-day, no one was al owed into the meeting room except for a couple of CIA men

that included Chadwel and Philip G. Strong. Hynek and Ruppelt cooled their heels outside for their chance to enter and present their information.

Ruppelt made it clear during his presentation that most of the data they had gathered was observational. □at is, they had relied on the abilities of the witnesses to accurately estimate size, distance, and speed. Ruppelt wrote,

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“We could say only that some of the UFOs had been traveling pretty fast.”

Ruppelt pointed out that radar cases were available, but open to the interpretation of the operators, which put them into the category of observational. □ey had to rely on the abilities of the radar technicians and operators for their interpretation of what was seen on the scope and no one had any idea of how reliable those observations might be.

J. Allen Hynek.

Ruppelt also said there were no good physical evidence cases. He was unaware of the Roswel UFO case, and in a search of the Project Blue Book les over the years, only a single mention of Roswel has been found. It is in another case and is in the second paragraph of a three-paragraph story. □e article only suggests that the officers at Roswel have been issued a

“blistering rebuke” for their claim of “capturing” a ying saucer.

Ruppelt also said that most of the photographs they had seen were fakes, some crude, others more sophisticated. He also suggested

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that photographs, no matter how good, would not prove the case. In the world of today even videotape of ying saucers in motion are easy to fake, making photographic evidence even more problematic.

□e difference was movies, and Project Blue Book had two that were good. One of them, taken in Montana in 1950, showed two brightly lighted objects crossing the sky, passing behind a tower and over a roo□op. It was a short segment, but it was fascinating.

□ere were two witnesses in this case Nick Mariana, who took the lm,

and Virginia Raunig, who was with Mariana and saw the objects in the sky.

While she watched them, Mariana ran to his car to get his 16mm movie camera so that he could lm them. He ran back to where he could see the

objects clearly and exposed the short lm.

According to Mariana, the two objects crossed the sky in a straight line.

On the lm, the objects seem to ash brightly once and then move away from the camera. In less than twenty seconds, according to Mariana's estimate, the UFOs disappeared. Raunig watched the objects as Mariana lmed them but said she had only seen them for ve or ten seconds.

□e Montana Movie

□is case becomes important because it involves indirect evidence and the question of the Air Force integrity in the investigation of UFOs. While some of the evidence of the ying saucers seen on the lm has been lost, the evidence that the Air Force tampered with the lm can be proven.

□e testimony of the witnesses, Nick Mariana and Virginia Raunig, tel

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us the accepted answer, Air Force ghters, is incorrect. Both witnesses said they had seen the ghters in another part of the sky before they saw the UFOs and that the objects they saw had a speci c non-aircra□-like shape to them. □e witness testimony, then, does not lead to the aircra□ explanation and if there is a fault with that testimony, it is the lack of numbers. We have two people on the record and it would be much better if there had been a dozen scattered around the city but no one else came forward. Or rather, those who might have seen something were ignored by Air Force

investigators.

Quite natural y, Mariana was excited by the lm and once it had been

processed and returned, he showed it to various civic groups. At one of these meetings, someone suggested that the Air Force might nd the lm interesting. In October 1950, an officer from Maelstrom Air Force Base, which formerly had been named Great Fal s AFB, arrived to interview Mariana about what he had seen and what he had lmed.

Early analysis of the lm proved nothing. Mariana said that the objects

had been in sight for about twenty seconds, but later measurements based on the time it took to retrieve the camera suggested they were in sight for closer to a minute. □e Air Force suggested that two jet ghters were in the area at the time and bright sunlight re ecting from the fuselages might account for the bright glow and the disc shape, and they didn’t seem overly interested in taking the investigation further.

□ere are notes in various case les, including those at Project Blue Book, suggesting others did see the something in the sky that day, but since these leads surfaced as a result of the publicity about the movie and it was several weeks a□er the fact, none of them were pursued. Had someone done

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that in 1950, we might be having a different discussion today. □is witness testimony was rejected simply because it was considered to be

contaminated, a fact that was not in evidence. And, to the Air Force's way of thinking, if they didn't interview the witness, then he or she simply didn't exist. □is attitude would be in evidence in other multiple witness cases.

□ere are notes in various case files, including those at Project Blue Book, suggesting others did see the something in the sky that day

□e real prize in this case was the lm of the objects. Here was something that could be taken into the lab and measured. To study this aspect of the case, the witness testimony was unnecessary. No interpretation of what they saw was needed. □ere were images on the lm and that should be sufficient.

Interestingly, in 1950, when rst contacted about the lm, the Air Force didn't particularly care about it. □ey learned that two ghters might have been in the area at the time and that was al they needed to know. □e solution was built out of this.

Scienti c investigation came about in the mid-1950s when, Dr. M. L.

Baker, Jr., then with Douglas Aircra□ Company, began a detailed analysis.

Using the evidence available on the lm, Baker was able to make a number of calculations. Using the foreground detail, as wel as the speed of the objects as evidenced by their motion, he concluded that if the objects were about a quarter mile from the camera, they were at 320 feet of altitude and moving at eighteen miles an hour. If they were ten miles away, they were at 12,800 feet and traveling at 690 miles an hour.

Baker ran a series of tests using both actual aircra□ and scale models.

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Filming with a camera similar to the one used by Mariana, he photographed aircra at varying distances and altitudes. At twelve miles, a DC-3 seemed to duplicate a portion of the Montana movie.

Studying the lm careful y, Baker determined that the objects were two

miles from the camera. According to his work, at that range, the F-94s the Air Force offered as the solution to the case would have been easily

identi able as aircra. As the distance from the camera increased, so did the speed until at twelve miles—the range at which the DC-3 momentarily duplicated the lm with re ections off the fuselage—the estimated speed was about two times that possible for the airplane. e details of the aircra

were only masked for a few seconds, meaning that Mariana would have been able to identify them had they been DC-3s. Besides, there was no evidence of two DC-3s in the area ying in formation at the time he shot the lm.

Based on his examination of the lm, Baker decided that it didn't show

birds or bal oons and he was fairly certain that had it been aircra that at some point the re ections hiding the detail would have disappeared because of the length of the lm and the time it had taken Mariana to get to his car to get out the movie camera. In other words, the length of the lm did not translate into the absolute length of the sighting.

And here is where they ran into another problem. Mariana claimed that

his lm had been altered by the Air Force. He said that about thirty frames had been cut from the beginning of the movie in which the oval shape of the objects was clearly visible. e Air Force denied that they had altered the lm but there was a letter in the Project Blue Book les in which the Air Force did admit to taking out a frame because the sprockets had been damaged. is is where the evidence of a cover-

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up begins, and it suggests something more about the nature of the Robertson Panel.

Claiming a cover-up is a serious al egation and the question becomes, can we prove it? And this is where we can conduct a little more science, if we al ow our de nition to expand a bit. Barry Greenwood leads the way on this and offers just such proof, and in doing so provides an il ustration on scienti c investigation.

□e Greenwood Investigation of the Film's Length

In a September 2000 article, "On the Question of Tampering with the 1950

Great Fal s UFO Film" published in the UFO Historical Revue, Barry Greenwood wrote:

First was John Wuertner, Mariana's attorney…. When interviewed about the lm … Wuertner said that the Air Force kept the lm for a long period [and]

"…I know doggone wel that that tape when it was returned, was little or nothing to it." Wuertner said that he recal ed better views of the lm in the original cut. " … when I saw it compared to what came back, it wasn't complete. □e main part that I recal that didn't come back was when it was right overhead. Now it started in the east and as it arose on the horizon then there was a part cut out and al we have le□ was the part disappearing over the west." He added that there was the appearance of spinning. " … if it were uniform, you'd get the same re ection on the same spot. But as it turned, you could get the de nite reaction of spinning." Moreover, he continued, "If I had to make an estimate of what I thought had been cut off, I would say that it was, oh gosh, maybe one-fourth to one- □h—it would be hard to say. But it would seem that they cut off the most obvious part. In other words, the part to me that seemed to bare out his contentions more than anything else."

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Another testament came from E. P. Furlong, managing editor of the Great Fal s Tribune. He saw the lm original y, then later on TV, feeling that the TV

version was considerably shorter. He was likely referring to a broadcast of the lm UFO (1956) which included the entire lm available a□er Mariana received his edited copy.

Tony Dalick ran a sporting goods store where the lm had been run before being sent to the Air Force. He testi ed that there was “a lot missing, perhaps 2-3 feet.” He remembered two objects, de nitely spinning, shaped like a wafer of peppermint candy. □e objects were closer and clearer on the unreturned part of the lm.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, where about fi□een feet of the film was sent, but seven feet of that film disappeared.

Craig [of the Condon Committee, which was investigating the Montana movie as part of their Air Force- nanced work] interviewed Nicholas Mariana seventeen years a□er the event. He clari ed some aspect of the sighting detail.

On the al eged spinning motion: “You could see the spinning action of the center portion in the middle of the lm.”

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On the “notch” al egedly seen as a reference point for the spinning motion: “…

there was a little break between the actual rest of the body of the machine and this portion of it. You could see there was action. You couldn’t see it with your eye but you could see it a□er I got the telephoto lm back.”

On the diagonal cut at the beginning of the lm: “□e reason I know it was cut, too, was that they came back with the original and they had spliced it diagonal y. Wel , I never used the diagonal splice. I used horizontal splice…. “

Barry Greenwood wrote:

Let’s look more at the lm strip itself. As mentioned earlier, I had obtained a 16mm print of the Air Force’s copy years ago from the National Archives.

□e length of the actual Great Fal s footage is 6 feet, 3/4 inch, with a 42-inch blank lead and a 52-inch blank end. □e total length of the lmstrip is about 14

feet. □ere is no tel ing when the blanks were added on but they were not part of the original lm and they were certainly added by the Air Force.

According to Captain Byrnildsen’s [original Air Force investigator of the movie] transmittal letter of October 6, 1950, approximately 15 feet of lm was sent to Wright-Patterson AFB. But in a clipping cited in Jerome Clark’s □e UFO Encyclopedia (2nd ed. 1998) from the Great Fal s Tribune (October 6, 1950), Byrnildsen is said to have told the reporter that he picked up 8 feet of lm from Mariana. Unless someone made errors in quoting the footage, it seems like Byrnildsen picked up eight feet of lm from Mariana, added on the blank footage and sent the nished product to Wright-Patterson. My copy of the lm, with blank l er, is 14 feet, in close agreement with what was sent to Wright-Patterson.

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If you've been reading careful y, you can see a problem. □e supposedly complete copy of the edited Air Force print, that which Mariana received a□er having had his lm "reduced," is nearly two feet shorter than the lowest estimate of what the Air Force had said they had received at Wright-Patterson in 1950! Since on a viewing of the existing print there are no major jump cuts in the sequence, which ows rather smoothly, and since the lm ends about where the witness has testi ed (the objects moving into the distance and disappearing), one must conclude that about two feet of lm is missing from the beginning of the sequence.

□is is exactly what Mariana claims. It is also in good agreement with the testimony of Tony Dalick, the sporting goods store owner who had seen the footage before and a□er the claimed editing by the Air Force, saying that he felt

"two to three feet" were missing from the beginning.

In 1956, Dr. Robert M. L. Baker produced an analysis of the Montana lm, a treatment that was later updated and printed in □e Journal of the Astronautical Sciences for January-February 1968, under the title

"Observational Evidence of Anomalistic Phenomena." He concluded that nearby jet aircra□ should have been resolvable on the lm, but at greater distances the brightness and speed of the images were too great to have been aircra□. In other words, the objects were unidenti ed. Of relevance to this article are remarks in Baker's article about the lmstrip itself. He said that his analysis focused upon just 225 frames of the lm because of the presence of foreground objects, by which precise measurements could have been made. 65

frames at the beginning of the lm were not used except for brightness measurements. □is gives us 290 frames total that Baker had available of the UFOs (290 frames? Ed.). □e lm was given to Baker for study by Greene-Rouse Productions, the makers of the documentary UFO mentioned earlier.

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□e clip was the end product supplied to Mariana a□er the 1952 Air Force analysis, and supplied to Greene-Rouse Productions when a deal was struck to

use the footage in the documentary. Greene-Rouse arranged an independent analysis, presumably to be sure that the Im showed truly anomalous images.

Now the problem with this is that my copy of the Air Force Montana print is only 243 frames long. 47 more frames had disappeared between 1952 and the time I had obtained the Im from the National Archives! Could it have been that the Air Force clipped the footage again, knowing that the Im was to be released publicly sometime a□er the mid-1970s upon the transfer of Blue Book records to the National Archives. We might want to title the remaining sequence of the Montana footage "□e Incredible Shrinking Film"!

A photo of what appears to be two UFOs over Great Falls.

□e Air Force had already decided that the Im had shown two F-94s (see Project Blue Book's conclusion). □is was in spite of the 1952

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reinvestigation by the then head of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, Captain Edward Ruppelt, at the direction of the Pentagon. Ruppelt had said that in 1950 there was no interest on the part of the Air Force in UFOs. □eir pre-Blue Book program, Project Grudge, had written off the Montana lm as jets a□er a quick viewing.… Upon examining the data anew, the new study narrowed down the

possible explanations to the F-94s in the area. But as Ruppelt explained, "First we studied the ight paths of the two F-94s. We knew the landing pattern being used on the day of the sighting, and we knew when the two F-94s landed. □e two jets just weren't anywhere close to where the two UFOs had

been. Next we studied each individual light and both appeared to be too steady to be re ections. We drew a blank on the Montana movie —it was an unknown."

If the head of Project Blue Book decided that the UFOs were unexplained a□er a lengthy investigation in 1952, who decided that the conclusion in the Blue Book les should remain "aircra□"? □ere were no further investigations of the Montana lm. Perhaps it was the same decision making process that performed the lm alterations?

Probably the greatest debunking of UFOs came in the form of the Condon Committee, which functioned from 1966 to the publication of its report "□e Scienti c Study of Unidenti ed Flying Objects." □e project was created ostensibly to relieve the Air Force of having anything further to do with UFO

investigations. UFOs had become a nuisance problem for the Air Force, stuck in a no-win situation of chasing down mostly ordinary reports, 90% of which were identi able as mundane stimuli. □e Condon Report dismissed any notion that UFOs were worthy of scienti c attention, or that they posed a threat to national security.

Yet their discussion of the Montana lm is curiously less critical than one had become used to in dealing with the typical Air Force public relations machine at the time.

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□e Committee's investigator of the Montana lm, Dr. Wil iam Hartmann, said in the report, "Both individuals (Mariana and Raunig) have recently affirmed the observation, and there is little reason to question its validity. □e case remains unexplained. Analysis indicates that the images on the lm are difficult to reconcile with aircra□ or other known phenomena, although aircra□ cannot entirely be ruled out."

A□er summarizing the case, Hartmann, attempting to explain a discrepancy in the witnesses' estimates of the duration of the sighting, said the discrepancy

"probably refers to the fact that Witness 1 (Mariana) made about 20 seconds of lm." □at's 5 seconds, or 80 frames of lm, more than the current Air Force print; or 2 seconds, or 32 frames, more than the Baker copy obtained from Greene-Rouse Productions. □e 2-second difference is in close agreement with Mariana's claim that at least an estimated 35 frames were shaved from the original.

Hartmann concludes by summarizing arguments for and against aircra□

re ections being responsible for the images. He states, "While such a hypothesis (the F-94 explanation) is tenable, it con icts with some of the so□

data. It is judged reasonable only to regard this object as unidenti ed."

□is il ustrates the point of cover-up and conspiracy so wel . Greenwood has taken a look at the Montana movie, at the physical dimensions of the movie, something that is outside the realm of subjective opinion, and provided an answer to the question of Air Force manipulation. What he proves, and what could be duplicated, are the measurements of the lm. We can determine either by a frame count or by actual measurement of the lm that it has been reduced signi cantly.

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While this much detail about the movie doesn't say much about the Robertson Panel techniques, or the Air Force investigation for that matter, it does prove the point. At the end of their research, they decided that the movie showed the two jet ghters that might, or might not, have been in the area, ignoring the witness testimony. With the movie shortened to remove the frames on which Mariana said the disc shape could be seen, what had

been some important proof became just a short lm of two bright spots that could be almost anything.

□e examination of the lm, with those frames removed, doesn't al ow

for a conclusion of alien spacecra□. □e hard data on the lm, based on the various studies, show that the aircra□ explanation doesn't work. It should leave the lm as "unidenti ed."

According to Ruppelt, the last day of Robertson Panel meetings was reserved for a review of the lms. Ruppelt believed these were the best evidence held by Blue Book. No one believed they had been faked, which

meant that no one considered them to be hoaxes. □ere were other mundane explanations available, at least in the minds of those on the panel.

It was on that last a□ernoon, a Friday, with Hynek invited to stay inside the meeting room, that Robertson was given the task of writing the nal report. Swords wrote about this, based on his review of the documents and his discussions with Hynek about it.

"Both individuals (Mariana and Raunig) have recently affirmed the observation, and there is little reason to question its validity. □e case remains unexplained."

"I can't imagine that H. P. Robertson, a guy like him, is going to sit down and late into the evening and bang out a dra□ of the report on his own that somehow, mysteriously, the next morning is already read by Lloyd Berkner and has already been taken by Marshal Chadwel to

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the Air Force Directorate of Intel igence and been approved," Swords wrote. "So when they show up on Saturday, Robertson presents this dra to the rest of the committee and the rest of the committee does minor revisions…. ere are

some remarks that are out of line that they decided are not going to be included."

Swords noted that this seems a little unreal. According to him, "It seems an amazingly cut-and-dried deal that by the time Saturday shows up, here's this mildly to be revised dra that has already been seen by one of the other committee members who wasn't even there for the rst two and a half days.

It's already been seen by Chadwel and the U.S. Air Force."

Dewey Fournet, who had the chance to review the data, who had been

present for some of the sessions, and now had a forty-year perspective, said that the scientists had no choice in their conclusions. For him and for them, the evidence simply wasn't persuasive. ere was little more than the testimonies of the witnesses, none of whom had appeared in front of the committee so that their observations could be examined. Others, later, would simply refer to such testimony as "anecdotal gossip," which much later would become the ral ying cry of the debunking community.

Although hindsight shows that such an attack was impossible in 1952,

those in intelligence at the time didn't know the sorry state of Soviet

missile and bomber development.

But to understand the Robertson Panel it is necessary to understand what was happening at the time. UFO sightings, including radar

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con rmation and ghter interception of the objects, had just happened over Washington, D.C. UFOs were ying around over the capital and it appeared that the Air Force was unable to stop them. □is appeared to be a threat to national security, if nothing else, with the emphasis on appeared.

But if the UFOs were nothing more than hoaxes, mirages, misidenti cations, and limited sightings, meaning that the witnesses had not gotten a good look at objects, then national security wasn't an issue at al . If the UFOs were al basical y imaginary, regardless of the stimulation, then the Air Force was doing its job because there was nothing to intercept, there was nothing to chal enge, and nothing to fear.

□ey did suggest, however, that there was one area of concern. Fournet

mentioned, as did Ed Ruppelt, that too many UFO reports at the wrong time could mask a Soviet attack. Although hindsight shows that such an attack was impossible in 1952, those in intel igence at the time didn't know the sorry state of Soviet missile and bomber development. □ey thought that a sudden ood of UFO reports, as had just happened in July 1952, could create havoc in message centers; as the classi ed message traffic increased, critical messages might be lost in the over ow. A possible Soviet attack might be lost in that over ow.

With this as a concern, the Robertson Panel decided to address the issue.

□e report said that "although evidence of any direct threat from these sightings was whol y lacking, related dangers might wel exist from: a.

Misidenti cation of actual enemy artifacts by defense personnel. b.

Overloading of emergency channels with 'false' information … c.

Subjectivity of public to mass hysteria and greater vulnerability to possible enemy psychological warfare."

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□e report continued, creating what they thought was a need to reduce

or suppress UFO reports. “Although not the concern of the CIA, the rst two of these problems may seriously affect the Air Defense intel igence system, and should be studied by experts, possibly under the ADC. If UFOs become discredited in a reaction to the ‘ ying saucer’ scare, or if reporting channels are saturated with false and poorly documented reports, our capability of detecting hostile activity wil be reduced. Dr. Page noted that more competent screening or ltering of reported sightings at or near the source is required, and that this can be accomplished by an educational program.”

□is, at rst, seems that this is a reasonable idea. But in the event of a Soviet attack, the communications would not come solely through the communications centers at various levels of command. □ose on the front

line of the attack, meaning those who were manning the various radar fences, who were at the various forward Air Force bases, would communicate more directly with their superiors.

In other words, no one would rely on a classi ed message that needed to

be encrypted, decrypted, and carried from the message center to the headquarters, wherever that headquarters might be. In 1952, those at the forward bases would have picked up the telephone, one of the many dedicated lines, and spoken directly to their superiors, probably tel ing them that a coded message would be coming, if it was needed.

But the idea of an educational program to teach people to spot the natural and astronomical phenomena did make some sense. If the public was more familiar with the phenomena that appeared in the sky including

meteors, Venus, and weather events, then the number of UFO reports might be signi cantly reduced because those who once might

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have been fooled would not be able to tel the difference between Venus and something ying in the atmosphere.

□e problem arises when the whole of the educational program is examined. Under that banner, the panel recommended, "□e Panel's concept

of a broad educational program integrating efforts of al concerned agencies was that it should have two major aims: training and 'debunking.'"

Some of the ideas offered weren't al that bad. □e training, according to the Panel, would result in witnesses being able to identify those "unusual y il uminated objects…. □is training should result in a marked reduction in reports caused by misidenti ed cases and resultant confusion."

□e problem with the Panel's report came in the next paragraph where

they used the word "debunking." While almost al agree that to debunk myths, legends, and fantasies is a good idea, here the suggestion seemed to be a propaganda campaign aimed not at explaining those cases that were misidenti cations, misinterpretations, hoaxes, or mistaken identity, but in simply convincing people there was nothing to the UFO reports. In other

words, debunk the whole of the UFO phenomena with little regard to the

accuracy of the information.

Robertson wrote, "□e 'debunking' aim would result in reduction in public interest in ' ying saucers' which today evokes a strong psychological reaction. □is education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures, and popular articles. Basis of such education would be actual case histories which had been puzzling at rst but later explained. As in the case of conjuring tricks, there is much less stimulation if the 'secret' is known. Such a program should tend to reduce the current gul ibility of the public and

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consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda. □e Panel noted that the general absence of Russian

propaganda based on a subject with so many obvious possibilities for exploitation might indicate a possible Russian official policy.”

□e Panel discussed what they had meant by an educational program.

Many in the UFO community have seen it as more of a “disinformation”

program, designed to explain al UFO sightings with the mundane so that

interest in UFOs would disappear. It was to convince people that UFOs were nothing more than misidenti cations, hal ucinations, and hoaxes, and therefore not worth investigating.

To take this even further, it was suggested by some who were at many of

the Panel’s meetings that the information presented to the members had been “managed” to lead to several predetermined conclusions. □e Panel had a limited life, they were unable to examine some of the sightings and questions in detail, and when there was a stumble, Robertson had a quick answer. For example, while some of the members were intrigued by the

“Utah” movie, Robertson thought it merely showed birds and was quite vocal in his explanation of it.

□e Utah Movie

Examination of the film by experts … suggested … the objects were internally lighted, and that they weren’t balloons or birds.

□e Utah movie was a lm taken in 1952 near Tremonton, Utah, by Navy

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Warrant Officer Delbert C. Newhouse. He was traveling to a new duty station when he and his wife spotted a loose formation of objects in the clear, blue sky. He thought enough of them to stop the car and retrieve his 16mm movie camera from the trunk. He then made a short lm of the objects as they swarmed high in the sky. When of one of them broke away

from the formation he fol owed it, al owing it to cross the frame to provide some reference for later analysis.

□ese were bright white objects seeming to wheel in the late morning sun. Examination of the lm by experts, in the same depth that the Montana movie had been studied, suggested, at least to the Navy analysts, the objects were internal y lighted, and that they weren't bal oons or birds. □ey were unable to identify them as anything conventional. In other words, they were stumped.

But Robertson presented a lm of seagul s soaring above the ground and

suggested this was what Newhouse had seen. He thought that the birds were at the extreme range of vision and therefore no apping of the wings could be detected. □ey were just bright white blobs re ecting the bright sunlight in the late morning sky.

□is, of course, ignored two important points. One was that Newhouse

was a Navy officer and had seen seagul s many times in the past both over land and out to sea. It wasn't as if he was experiencing something new that should have confounded him.

But, more importantly, when Newhouse was interviewed by Air Force investigators, he told them that he had seen the objects at a much closer range. □ey were disc-shaped objects but by the time he stopped the car,

retrieved his camera, and began to lm, they had moved off, into the distance, so the shape was not readily visible.

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So, Robertson and his al ies had dismissed two of the best pieces of evidence, the movie footage taken in Montana and Utah. With that out of

the way, a careful presentation of the data al owed for a biased picture to be drawn. It could be argued, based on what is now known, that the Panel was designed speci cal y so that time would not al ow embarrassing questions to be asked. It can also be suggested that the Panel was loaded with scientists who had already formed their conclusions before they looked at a single bit of the evidence or read a single word of testimony. It can be suggested that some of the truly extraordinary cases that had been submitted had been overlooked, especial y those by scientists. And it can be argued, based on the timing, that the nal report was written before a single minute of testimony or data review had been accomplished.

If the Panel was designed not to actual y review the status of the UFO

investigations—but rather to reduce public interest and suggest that UFO

study was a waste of resources—could the designer have had enough con dence in his own abilities to micromanage the results so that they would come to his conclusion? How could he be sure that some wild card

wouldn’t jerk his plans off the rails and lead the Panel in another direction?

□is seems to have been a big risk to take. It also implies that those managing the information at the top were not afraid that too much would be learned by the Panel members. If the plan had been to convince the Panel members that there was little to the UFO sightings so that this impression could be conveyed to the general public, it seemed to have worked.

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According to Swords, Robertson, Chadwel , and the others at the CIA, they were just the sort of heavy thinkers who could design such a plan and pul it off. When al is said and done, the only member of the Panel who was even mildly unbiased was □ornton Page, and he was overwhelmed by the prestige of the other, high-powered members and the personality of Robertson.

□e Panel's ultimate purpose, it might be said, was to determine if UFOs

posed a threat to national security. □e cases they reviewed contained little more than sighting information and nothing to suggest UFOs might be

hostile or threaten national security. Such a conclusion would come later, in the form of the Brookings Institute study that would examine the results of two societies learning about the other. □at is to say that when a technological superior society meets with a technological inferior one, the inferior society ceases to exist. □at doesn't mean it was conquered. It means that the introduction of the technology wil radical y alter the society so that it begins to need that technology to survive, and by doing that, is changed, many times for the worse.

□e odd thing about the Robertson Panel was its suggestion that UFO

investigations through Project Blue Book should be expanded and that the project should lose its classi ed status. Robertson believed that the best way to debunk the UFOs and to educate the public was to make everything transparent. Besides, he knew that the real y good UFO reports were not part of the Blue Book system.

□e Bolender Memo

J. Al en Hynek, who was a scienti c consultant to Project Blue Book for many years, o□en said that the real y good cases didn't make it into the Blue Book les. He knew, from his experience, that some of the reports that should have gone to Blue Book by regulation simply didn't show up there.

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He suspected another reporting system, but he couldn't prove that there was one. And had his suppositions been correct, then he was talking about a conspiracy to hide UFO information.

Brigadier General Arthur Exon had been the base commander at

Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in the mid-1960s. □e base commander is

similar to the mayor of a city. He is responsible for the facilities and support of the various base operations such as military police, repair, and upkeep. In fact, in today's Army, each facility has a unit known as the "mayor's cel ."

Exon said that while he was base commander he would periodical y receive a telephone cal to prepare an aircra□ for a mission outside the local area. □at meant he was to supply an aircra□ from those assigned to Wright-Patterson and that aircra□ could be sent almost anywhere in the world given the capabilities of military aircra□.

Exon himself described this on May 19, 1991. He said, "I know that while I was there … I had charge of al of the administrative airplanes and had to sign priority airplanes to the members who would go out and investigate reported sightings…. I remember several out in Wyoming and Montana and that area in the '60s, '64 and '65…. I knew there were certain teams of people, they're representing headquarters USAF as wel as the organizations there at Wright-Pat, FTD and so on…. When a crew came back it was their own business. Nobody asked any questions…. "

He expanded on this, saying, "□e way this happened to me is that I would get a cal and say that the crew or team was leaving … there was such and such a time and they wanted an airplane and pilots to take X number of people to wherever…. □ey might be gone two or three days or might be

gone a week. □ey would come back and that would be the end of it."

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Asked about the overal control of these teams, Exon said, “I always thought they were part of that unholy crew in Washington that started keeping the lid on this thing.”

“I always thought they were part of that unholy crew in Washington that started keeping the lid on this thing.”

Everything said to this point suggested that the operation was run through FTD, the parent organization to Blue Book at Wright-Patterson. But in an interview conducted about a month later, on June 18, 1991, Exon clari ed what he had meant.

Asked if these teams of eight to □een people were stationed at Wright-

Patterson, he said, “□ey were, they would come from Washington, D.C.

□ey’d ask for an airplane tomorrow morning and that would give the guys a chance to get there [Wright-Patterson] by commercial airline. … Sometimes they’d be gone for three days and sometimes they would be gone for a week.

I know they went to Montana and Wyoming and the northwest states a number of times in a year and a half…. □ey went to Arizona once or twice.”

He also said, “Our contact was a man, a telephone number. He’d cal and

he’d set the airplane up. I just knew there was an investigative team.”

What al this boils down to is an attempt to cover the activity. □e team, whoever they were, would y into Dayton, Ohio, on commercial air and then drive out to the base. If a reporter attempted to trace the movements of the team a□er it had been deployed, the trail led back to Wright-Patterson.

A□er that it just disappeared.

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□is outside team, or outside teams, were made up of eight to □een individuals at a time when Project Blue Book had three military men and a single secretary assigned. □ey were stationed at Wright-Patterson, but the other teams were assigned somewhere else, and there is no reason to assume that al members of a team were assigned to the same base. □ey would come together as needed.

□is al suggests, strongly, that there were other people involved in the investigation of UFOs and they were not members of the Project Blue Book

team. Hynek hints that the good reports went somewhere else and Exon suggested that an investigative team was stationed elsewhere and cal ed when needed. □ey don't appear to be part of Blue Book.

Brigadier General C. H. Bolender provided the documentation to prove

the point. On October 20, 1969, some seventeen years a□er the Robertson

Panel ended its truncated investigation of UFOs, Bolender wrote about Project Blue Book and the investigation of UFOs. Part of his memo is a response to questions about what the University of Colorado was doing and how that might affect national security.

In paragraph four of his memo, Bolender wrote, "As early as 1953, the

Robertson Panel concluded 'that the evidence presented on Unidenti ed Flying Objects shows no indication that these phenomena constitute a direct physical threat to national security.' … In spite of this nding, the Air Force continued to maintain a special reporting system. □ere is stil , however, no evidence that Project Blue Book reports have served any intel igence function. Moreover, reports of unidenti ed ying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with JANAP 146 [Joint Army, Navy, Air Force

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Publication] or Air Force Manual 55-11, and are not part of the Blue Book system."

In other words, the suspicions of Hynek and Exon were con rmed by this document. □ere was, and stil is, a system for reporting of UFO

incidents. □e Air Force, by its very nature, is charged with the protection of the United States, and UFOs ying through our airspace threatens that security. What they have done is take civilian reporting, and a responsibility to report back to civilians, out of the loop. Now al the data col ected, al the information derived, can remain safely hidden inside the military bureaucracy.

□e Final Truth

As for the Robertson Panel, Dewey Fournet (who was in attendance for some of the sessions), years later, believed that the Panel members were honest in their evaluations of the UFO sightings. Remember, he believed that the evidence presented was weak and the only conclusions that could be drawn were those that were drawn. But Fournet had not been there for everything and he did not know that the nal report existed, at least in rough dra□ form prior to the nal sessions, and might have existed before any evidence was heard.

What the evidence shows us today is that the Robertson Panel wasn't a

group of highly credentialed and highly placed scientists taking a dispassionate look at UFOs. It was a Panel designed with speci c conclusions formed prior to any work of the Panel, and according to Mike Swords, with the report written before the last testimony was given. It was clearly approved prior to the last day of the Panel, and was designed to end interest in UFOs by explaining everything even if those explanations were less than solid.

In other words, which would be repeated in later documents, possible

solutions should be treated as if they were the actual solutions. Cases that were labeled with a probable or possible, suddenly had

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the quali cations removed. UFOs were to be explained. Period.

On May 31, 1987, the London Observer announced that a British UFO

researcher, Timothy Good, had in his possession documents that

claimed the United States had not only recovered the wreck of an alien cra□, but they also had found the bodies of the alien ight crew inside it. With the story picked up by Reuters and put on the international wire, Wil iam Moore, Jaime Shandera, and Richard Doty in the United States came forward saying that they had copies of these documents as wel .

□e whole story, however, as it is told by the proponents, is that in 1984

Shandera, a Hol ywood lm producer, received a rol of undeveloped 35mm

lm, in the standard brown paper wrapper, postmarked in Albuquerque, New Mexico. □e lm, when developed, contained what is now cal ed the

Eisenhower Brie ng Document (EBD) and the single-page letter that became known as the Truman Memo. According to the documents, the brie ng was prepared by Rear Admiral Roscoe Hil enkoetter (or

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so it is o□en al eged) for the President-elect Dwight Eisenhower and was delivered to him, Eisenhower, on November 18, 1952, as he was being briefed before his inauguration as President.

□e EBD suggested that there had been a crash of an alien ship, and that

the ship and the dead crew had been recovered by members of the Army Air Forces, and al the material and bodies had been own to Wright Field outside of Dayton, Ohio. □e document said, speci cal y:

On 07 July, 1947, a secret operation was begun to assure recovery of the wreckage of this object for scienti c study. During the course of this operation,

aerial reconnaissance discovered that four smal human-like beings had apparently ejected from the cra□ at some point before it exploded. □ese had fal en to earth about two miles east of the wreckage site. Al four were dead and badly decomposed due to action by predators and exposure to the elements during the approximately one week time period which had elapsed before their discovery.

□ere was also mention of another crash of “a second object, probably of

similar origin” near the smal Texas town of Del Rio on December 6, 1950, or more speci cal y the El Indio–Guerrero area of Mexico. Although the crash was in Mexico, American authorities were able to secure the site and remove the cra□ and bodies. □ese too were taken to Wright Field.

According to the portions of the document leaked to Shandera, who shared them with Moore, there were other, more interesting sections of the Eisenhower Brie ng Document, but those had not been included on the Im. Attachment “H,” for example, supposedly contained maps and

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photographs. While the maps would have been easy to fake, photographs,

especial y of the alien bodies either in the eld or being autopsied, would have been nearly impossible to forge. Had Attachment “H” been included, it would have gone a long way in providing some corroboration for the parts of the document now held by Moore and Shandera and would have supplied

some very powerful information about UFOs.

(N)early everyone inside the UFO community was talking about the Majestic-Twelve, but the conclusions about it varied wildly.

Analysis of the object, material from it and the bodies, al egedly completed at Wright Field, seemed to con rm that the cra was of extraterrestrial origin. Further study was authorized by a presidential executive order on September 24, 1947, signed by then-president Harry Truman. is document, referred to by some as a special, classi ed executive order, said, “As per our recent conversation on this matter, you are hereby authorized to proceed with al due speed and caution upon your undertaking. Herea er this matter shal be referred to as Operation Majestic-Twelve.”

Moore and Shandera sat on these documents until the spring of 1987. At that time, British writer and researcher Tim Good, who claimed to have received a copy from a source in the CIA, showed the EBD to the press. is forced Moore’s hand, and Moore released a copy (censored by Moore) to the American media. It was not long before articles about the brie ng had appeared in the New York Times and the Washington Post, and it also became the subject of a segment of ABC-TV’s late-night news program Nightline.

A er this publicity, nearly everyone inside the UFO community was talking about the Majestic-Twelve, but the conclusions about it varied wildly.

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Some believed the documents to be a classi ed report about alien spaceship crashes, others thought it was disinformation created to draw attention away from the investigation into the Roswel UFO crash or some sort of operation directed at the Soviet Union, and others thought of it as misinformation. In other words, they believed the brie ng to be a hoax created not by the government, but by someone inside the UFO community who had a

working knowledge of how brie ngs were created at the highest levels. □ey were motivated by their desire to keep the media spotlight focused on them.

In June 1989, the MUFON UFO Journal carried a story about the documents that included an il ustration on the front that was a page of the Eisenhower Brie ng Document. At that time, much of MUFON's leadership

believed that the document was authentic. It proved not only that some UFOs were alien, but that the U.S. government had learned the truth shortly a□er Kenneth Arnold had made his sighting of nine objects in June 1947.

□e discovery, or the leaking of the EBD, seemed to be the ultimate outcome of something that had begun forty-two years earlier when UFOs

rst burst into the headlines. It was suggested that the very rst of the official UFO investigations had begun in the early days a□er the Arnold sighting. It had been laid out in the les of the UFO projects and it was revealed by former Air Force Captain Edward Ruppelt.

Ruppelt, who had been the chief of Project Blue Book in the early 1950s, wrote a book, □e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, that seemed to support the idea of a super-secret committee. In the book he explained, "By the end of July 1947, the security lid was down tight. □e few members of the press who did inquire about what the Air Force was doing got the same

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treatment that you would get today [that is, 1956, when the book was published] if you inquired about the number of thermonuclear weapons stockpiled in the U.S.'s atomic arsenal. No one outside of a few high-ranking officers in the Pentagon knew what the people in the Quonset huts that housed the Air Technical Intel igence Center were thinking or doing."

And then he added, "□e memos and correspondence that Project Blue

Book inherited from the old UFO projects told the story of the early ying saucer era. □ese Memos and pieces of correspondence show that the UFO

situation was considered to be serious; in fact, very serious. □e paperwork of that period also indicated the confusion that surrounded the investigation; confusion almost to the point of panic. □e brass wanted an answer quickly, and people were taking off in al directions."

As noted earlier, this activity led, indirectly, to the letter signed by Nathan Twining and dated September 23, 1947. □e date is important because the Truman memo that accompanied the EBD carries the same date. □at suggests one of two things. Either the person who created the memo was aware of the UFO history, or those at the top levels of the U.S.

government were coordinating their activities in their attempt to learn what was happening in 1947.

While Twining was advocating the creation of a classi ed project to be

run by the military, Truman, in the memo, seemed to be directing the creation of a committee of mixed military officers and civilian scientists to exploit the nd from Roswel . While one, directed by the military, would have a classi cation level of secret, the other, the committee created by Truman, would be classi ed top secret, code word. It meant that unless someone possessed both a top-secret

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clearance and code word clearance, he or she would be denied access to the information. It was a much more highly classi ed project than the one run by the military.

All these documents suffered from one major problem and that was the

anonymous nature of their source.

And, if what had been found outside of Roswel had been an alien spacecra□, the technology that built it would be in the hands of the United States. It was a secret worth protecting. Only the brightest of the people in the government and military would be privy to the information. For al others, existence of the committee and its mandate would be denied for decades.

But someone with this al eged inside knowledge was not happy with the

security situation and had photographed the beginning of the Eisenhower

Brie ng Document and the Truman Memo creating the committee. Now al

that needed to be done was to verify the authenticity of the documents and the case for alien visitation would be proved, the case of government coverup would be proved, and the conspiracy to keep al this quiet would be proved. □is would be the smoking gun.

□e rst problem encountered for UFO researchers was that there was

no provenance for the documents. □ey arrived anonymously in the mail and on undeveloped lm. Bil Moore, a□er repeated requests from those inside the UFO community, and a few from the outside, nal y presented the envelope the lm had come in, showing that the package had al egedly been mailed from Albuquerque. □ere was no return address and that meant

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the chain of custody, or the chain of evidence, stopped right there. □at is, it could be fol owed no further than Bil Moore and Jaime Shandera, and that was the rst of the problems encountered when attempting to verify the authenticity of the documents.

Additional corroboration of the existence of MJ-12 was offered by Moore. A telex, known as the Aquarius Telex, from the Air Force Office of Special Investigation (AFOSI) that mentioned, in a single line, the MJ-12, seemed to prove that not only had MJ-12 existed, but that its life had extended over a number of years. □is was clearly proof that there was a provenance for this document, one that could be fol owed, or so it was claimed.

Al these documents suffered from one major problem and that was the

anonymous nature of their source. Moore and Shandera seemed to answer

that question with the discovery (in the National Archives in Washington, D.C.) of a memo from Robert Cutler, a special assistant to the President, to

General Nathan F. Twining. □is memo suggested that the “NSC/MJ-12

Special Studies Project” should “take place during the already scheduled White House meeting of July 16 [1954]….”

Moore, who claimed that he had received a number of cryptic postcards

that referred to speci c numbers that seemed to align with les held at the National Archives known as Record Groups, said that he had found the Cutler-Twining memo in a box of NSC documents that had only recently

been declassi ed. □e copy that Moore produced was authenticated as a

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“true copy” of a document held by the National Archives. □is seemed to

answer the question of provenance.

With al that, it seemed that MJ-12 had moved into the arena of having

been authenticated, at least in the minds of many in the UFO community.

Here was a document with a provenance, which had been found in the National Archives, and if that was true, then it suggested that the other, original MJ-12 documents could be authentic. For a moment, it seemed that MJ-12 had broken open the UFO eld. □e evidence for a cover-up was in

hand, and the existence of alien visitors was proved.

□e Skeptics Object

Quite natural y, those at the other end of the ufological spectrum believed that the documents were a hoax. Almost from the beginning they were offering evidence that something was wrong. American journalist and UFO

researcher Phil Klass voiced his opinion quickly and then began a search to prove that he was correct. One of the rst things that he discovered was that the signature on the Truman Memo matched exactly to that on another document. □is suggested to some that the memo was a hoax and if the memo was a hoax, then the EBD that accompanied it was probably a hoax as wel .

A questioned-document expert, original y identi ed only as P. T. by Klass, said that it was clear to him that the signature had been copied from an authentic document dated October 1, 1947, had been pasted onto the Truman Memo, and then photocopied to remove the tel tale cutlines.

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It later became clear that P. T. was Peter Tytel and his expertise as a questioned-document expert was sound. Stan Friedman attempted to lessen

the importance of Tytel ’s opinions by suggesting Tytel had worked for the CIA at one point. Ironical y, it was Friedman who had sent copies of the original MJ-12 documents to Tytel for his analysis. Tytel , then, is an accepted expert by both sides in the debate over authenticity, but one who is quoted only by the debunkers and ignored by the proponents. Later the smear of Tytel would continue to remove his testimony from the discussion.

Tytel , a□er his analysis of both the EBD and the Truman Memo, said

that the typeface used on the Truman Memo was most consistent with a Smith-Corona P102, which was used on typewriters a□er 1966. If true, this, by itself, meant the Truman Memo is a fake since it was supposedly created in 1947. Even if we accept the idea that the document dates no earlier than 1952, the date of the Eisenhower Brie ng, the date is too early for the typewriter used. Tytel said, “□is is the slam dunk.” To Tytel , the typewriter problem proved the memo a fake.

Friedman wasn’t convinced by Tytel ’s argument. Friedman, in his book,

writes about the typeface controversy: “Other examiners disagree with

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Klass's CIA source about the typewriter used for the rest of the memo." □is is clearly an attempt to discredit Tytel 's objection to MJ-12 by associating him with Klass and the CIA but again, it was a source original y approached by Friedman himself.

One of the sources that Friedman preferred and who he cited as a questioned-document examiner was a "man who worked for the USPO

[United States Post Office, which is, of course, the United States Postal Service] who disagreed with Tytel ." Friedman didn't offer the name of this man, how he had conducted his research, or what his expertise in questioned-document examination might be.

Phil Klass.

Another source that Friedman has used to support his case was Moore

and Shandera's □e MJ-12 Documents: An Analytical Report. Friedman wondered why other researchers and interested parties

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have not used it or referenced it in their work and why they haven't found it persuasive. □e reasons others might have avoided it may be as simple as the twenty- ve dol ar price tag and the fact that it was self-published more than a decade ago. Few people outside of the UFO community even know that it exists.

But the real point comes up in the conclusions which Friedman apparently didn't read as careful y as he should have. Moore and Shandera have looked at al the documents that they consider somehow related to the MJ-12 controversy and that were available to them when they prepared their report.

Of the Eisenhower Brie ng Document, they write, "[W]e give a value of

75% to the likelihood that the document is authentic, and 25% to the possibility that it is a fabrication."

Of the Truman Memo, they write, "As the document as a whole, it is either authentic or a wel -done and very probably official fabrication. We give a value of 35-40% for the former possibility, and 60-65% for the latter."

Or in other words, they believe the greater possibility is that the document is fraudulent. □ey don't mention that if the Truman Memo is a fake, then the EBD is probably a fake as wel .

Friedman, when chal enged about the identities of his questioned-docu-

ment examiners, admitted that he didn't have the names of the experts. If he was relying on information provided by Moore and Shandera and believing

them competent to make any sort of authoritative analysis, then he was relying on the opinion of two amateurs who produced the results that Friedman wanted to see, or rather seemed to produce the results he wanted to see. In such a case Tytel wins the argument based on

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his expertise and training and the only logical conclusion is these original documents are faked.

More importantly, Tytel pointed out that he wanted to see their (the unidenti ed questioned-document experts') report so that he could understand exactly what their expertise was. According to Tytel , unless they have a complete A-to-Z strike up of both the uppercase and lowercase letters, as wel as al the symbols and numbers for the typeface of the Underwood UP3A, their argument is without merit. Tytel said repeatedly

that he had al the drawings from the Underwood factory for the type style Friedman and the others claim it is. He said, "I have samples from typewriters with that type style on them that I used to type the text of the memo." In other words, he could make a letter-by-letter examination of the

type styles and draw an expert's conclusion that the type style on the Truman Memo is from a typewriter that didn't exist until a□er 1960.

In fact, on February 13, 2001, Friedman added to his objections of Tytel 's comments. He wrote, "I am aware of Peter Tytel 's o□and, informal, unwritten comments about the typewriters. However, he has, to the best of my knowledge, never provided a formal, official, written, paid-for analysis."

□e objection to Tytel 's comments, then, circle his reluctance to prepare a written report. □ere is a good reason for that. According to Tytel , he wants to be paid for his analysis and until someone comes up with his fee, he isn't going to provide the written document. Friedman simply rejects what Tytel said because Tytel did not supply the written report or, more likely, because Tytel didn't come to the conclusion that Friedman wanted. Tytel is convinced the documents he examined are fakes.

□e Truman Signature

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□e second major problem on the Truman Memo, again according to Tytel ,

is Truman's signature. □e signature on the executive order matches, exactly, another Truman signature, this one from a letter dated October 1, 1947. □e positioning of the signature on the memo also makes it suspect. Truman habitual y placed his signature so that the stroke on the "T" touched the bottom of the text. On the disputed Truman Memo that is not the case.

Moore and Shandera, in their □e MJ-12 Documents: An Analytical

Report write, a□er measuring the Truman signature, that it isn't an exact match. □ey suggest it is close, and, according to various handwriting experts, this makes the signature more consistent with authenticity.

□e controversy over that memo wasn't ended there. Joe Nickel and John Fischer, two skeptics who were interested in MJ-12, received a copy of

□e MJ-12 Documents: An Analytical Report in 1991. Nickel and Fischer believed, according to an unpublished paper, Further Deception: Moore and Shandera's MJ-12 Report, "[□e Moore and Shandera report] provides lessons in how not to investigate a ufological y related questioned document case…. Not only is neither a trained investigator, let alone a document specialist, but both are crashed-saucer zealots and one (Moore) has actual y been suspected of having forged the documents."

□en, to make their case, Nickel and Fischer again examine the status of the investigation of the Truman Memo. □ey reinforce their conclusion that the document is "an incompetent" hybrid, and say that "no genuine memo

has yet been discovered with such an erroneous mixture of elements." Moore and Shandera dismiss this criticism, according to

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Nickel and Fischer, “with the cavalier observation that there was ‘a wide variety of styles and formats in acceptable use at the time.’“

□e important point here is that there is a mixture of errors on the Truman Memo. It could be suggested, if there was but a single mistake, it could have been a one-time occurrence. Unfortunately, as noted, there are other errors on the document as wel and that suggests to many that it is fraudulent.

Nickel and Fischer had also pointed out that the Truman signature had been “placed uncharacteristical y low.” Moore and Shandera countered by saying, “□e problem with this assertion is that those who make it used only letters signed by Truman as the basis for their study.” Nickel and Fischer responded, writing, “We did no such thing … here Moore and Shandera are

guilty of outright misrepresentation … we studied typed letters and memos, handwritten notes, engraved thank-you cards, inscriptions and

photographs…. In every instance where Truman had personal y signed the

text … our observation of close placement applied.”

Friedman, however, rejects this argument, pointing out, correctly, that Nickel and Fischer have not reviewed every single document signed by Truman. □at means, somewhere, there could be another Truman signature

that conforms to that on the MJ-12 memo. Of course, Nickel and Fischer’s examination was of a representative sample of sufficient size for them to draw a legitimate conclusion. It is now incumbent on the proponents to produce a legitimate Truman document signed in the same manner but they

have failed, to this point, to do that.

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□e only exceptions to this that have been found are documents that contain Truman's signature but were not signed by him. □at is to say, his signature had been printed on the document. As a case on point, many veterans of the Second World War have a certi cate signed by Truman but

the signature was printed on the document rather than signed individual y by Truman.

In the nal argument listed in their response, Nickel and Fischer again examine the evidence that the signature on the questioned memo is an exact duplicate of an authentic Truman signature from a letter dated October 1, 1947. □ey write that "in forensic comparisons in which distortion can be a possibility— e.g., in attempting to match ngerprints, or to link a paint ake to a chipped surface—the Moore-Shandera (actual y Maccabee) approach is

not used. Instead, experts establish matching by demonstrating that an array of distinctive features in one item is also represented in the other. Using this approach, competent examiners have determined that the two [Truman]

signatures do in fact match."

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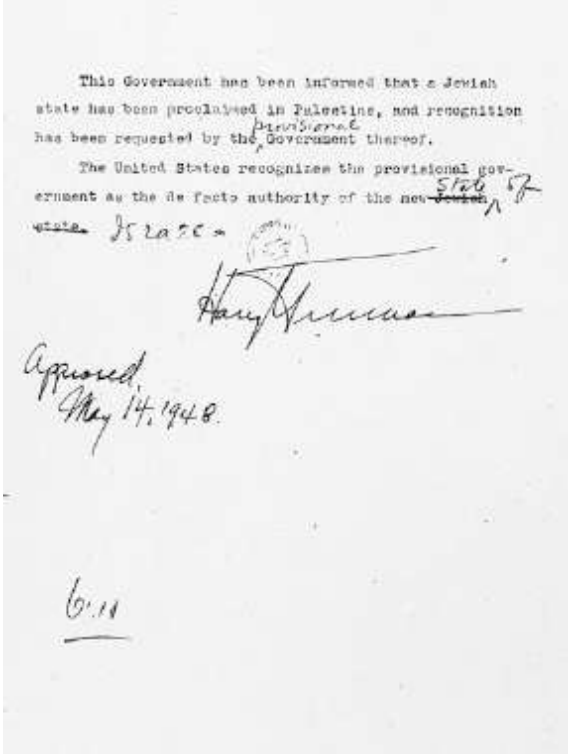

This Government has been informed that a Jewish state has been proclaimed in Palestine, and recognition has been requested by the Provisional Government thereof.

The United States recognizes the provisional government as the de facto authority of the new ~~Jewish~~ state.

Approved May 14, 1948.

Friedman does provide one additional argument about the authenticity.

He has said, repeatedly, that no one seemed to notice that the Truman Memo was typed with two typewriters. He points speci cal y to the date, and he suggests that this is a further proof of authenticity.

But those who work with questioned documents suggest otherwise.

According to them, the use of two typewriters is one of the markers of a faked document. Rather than being an indication of authenticity, then, the use of two typewriters is an indication of fraud and becomes just one more reason to reject the MJ-12 documents.

An example of President Truman's signature appears on this letter recognizing the then-new state of Israel. Note the appearance of the capital T.

Peter Tytell and His Examination

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In a tape-recorded interview with Peter Tytel on August 20, 1996, he was asked speci c questions about the Truman signature. To him, this was another “slam dunk.” It was a second major problem with the document which shouted fake at him.

Friedman has pointed out that the signature from the memo, when placed over the signature from the October 1 letter, is not an exact match.

He then belittles the claim that stretching in the copying process would lead to the differences in the signature. He also notes the careful measuring of the various components in the signature carried out by Moore and Shandera, proving their case. He suggests, because the two signatures are not an exact match, a reversal of an earlier opinion, that the signature must be authentic.

Such things, that is, the measuring of the signature looks good, looks scienti c, but is just so much “eyewash,” according to questioned-documents experts. In other words, it has no relevance in a discussion of copied signatures, especial y since the original document is unavailable and had been original y photographed and then printed from 35mm lm rather than

copied on a Xerox or Minolta or Panasonic.

In fact, there are appearances on the Truman signature that suggest it had been altered prior to it being applied to the memo. One expert said,

“ at is a demonstrable, transplanted signature.” And if it is a transplanted signature, the memo is a fake. Ironical y, one of the experts consulted by Friedman would make a similar determination, as noted later.

Tytel said,

Klass is the one who came up with the prototype signature. And that’s an absolute slam dunk. ere’s no question about it. When you look at the points where it intersects the typing on the original donor memo

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[that is, the October 1, 1947 letter] for the transplant, you can see that it was retouched on those points on the Majestic-12 memo. So, it's just a perfect t. □e thing was it wasn't photocopied and it wasn't photographed straight on…. □e guy who did one of the photographic prints had to tilt the base board to try and get the edges to come out square so whoever did the photography of the pieces of paper was not doing this on a properly set up copy stand. It was done, maybe on a tripod, or it was done hand held. However it was done, the documents

were not photographed straight on…. □ere's a slight distortion of the signature but it is not enough to make the difference here. Nowadays it you could probably get it to t properly with computer work but it's not that the signature is an overlay but it's that at those discrete points, and their dumb document examiners talked about the thinning of the stroke at this point. At that particular point, at the exact spot where it touches a typewritten letter and it has to be retouched to get rid of the letter.

When the discussion turned to the measurements made by Moore and

Shandera, he said, "Oh, give me a break…. It's just eye wash and what they're doing is looking at the distortions that you get from the photocopying process…. We're dealing with photocopies of photocopies of photocopies of the October rst donor document signature."

□e argument about the signature has moved into a new arena. Dr.

Robert Wood and his son Ryan suggest that the Truman Memo signature

might be authentic because Truman used an "autopen" to sign some documents. □is strange device would sign four documents at once. If true, then the signatures could be exact. To prove their point, they need to nd one of the other two, but have been unable to do that.

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In fact, there are appearances on the Truman signature that suggest it

had been altered prior to it being applied to the memo.

Of course Tytel ’s note that the signature on the Truman Memo has been

altered would rule out the autopen argument. □ere would be no reason to

alter the signature if Truman had used an autopen, but would be if the signature was li□ed, by copying, from one document and then pasted on another.

In fact, a close examination of the signature shows the same dots and spots from the donor document. □is would suggest that it wasn’t signed with an autopen, but that it was a photocopy of a real signature li□ed from another, authentic document.

Tytel went on to enumerate other problems with the whole Eisenhower

Brie ng. He said:

And it was just perfect because the whole thing of the twelve pages or however many pages it was. Most of the pages were just blank pages with just ve words on them, like Top Secret Memo or Appendix A or something like that. □e bulk of the narrative said see this appendix for the metal urgical analysis. See that appendix for the autopsy. Now those particular appendices, in order to make them look credible would require a considerable amount of technical knowledge and vocabulary. □ere is no question about that. You have to know how to talk the talk to write something about metal urgy or anatomy. And you can just say the metal urgical reports found that this was unlike anything that we’ve ever seen but then you have to list the most advanced tests that would be available in 1947 but would not be available in 1955 and you have to know too much. And you have to know the lingo of the human anatomy. You have to be a

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doctor basical y to say that this structure is not like that structure. So I can see why nobody would bother to fake those.

He continued by saying, “But a simply bureaucratic memo from

somebody who is steeped in bureaucratic lingo from having pored through

these archives as I’m sure that al the people involved on both sides of this issue have done. To fake one of those, that’s no big deal…. To get the right people on there and throw in one or two anti-UFO people just for fun….

□at’s not a problem.”

Final y, he said, “I want to smoke these people out because, quite frankly, I want to nuke them. □ese people are going around aiding in the … why do you want to do this? I’m somewhat annoyed at these people who say they are document examiners who go out there and support a blatantly bad piece of paper. Shame on them. I want to smoke them out … MJ-12 as a documentary hoax, which is what I take it to be, annoys me. I don’t know who the hoaxer is.”

Dueling Experts

Tytel , who had been sent the documents by Friedman, concluded that they were faked. He believed them fake because of his expertise, his complete strikeups for a wide variety of typewriters, and the mistakes that he found in the documents themselves. He communicated these negative results to Friedman, but Friedman ignored them. Instead, Friedman said that four other document examiners said the documents were authentic, but provided no name or credentials for those four experts until he identi ed one man, James A. Black, who had been hired by Dr. Robert Wood. He was not one of those other four.

In fact, Friedman dismisses Tytel ’s analysis as an “off-the-cuff opinion.”

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But he also notes that Tytel is a world-class questioned-document examiner that he, Moore, and Shandera had chosen to analyze the MJ-12 documents.

According to Friedman, Tytel didn't want his name associated with this and he issued no formal report. According to Tytel , he provided no written report because no one would pay for his services, which is not quite what Friedman was saying. He said that he would issue a nal report if someone would pay his fee.

Friedman wrote about another aspect of this, saying, "Fortunately Dr.

Robert M. Wood hired an expert, James A. Black, to perform a professional examination," implying here that somehow Tytel 's analysis was less than professional.

Black then reported, "My knowledge of typewriter fonts permits me to

conclude that the letter was likely to have been typed by an Underwood Standard typewriter. □e portions of the letter that can be clearly visualized match those of a typewriter exemplar of an Underwood Standard typed in

May 1940."

Tytel would, of course, dispute this saying that a complete workup or strikeup of the font to include the special characters, the numbers, and the symbols is necessary to be certain. □ere are many typewriter fonts that look quite similar when there is a simple comparison just between the letters.

Tytel worried that such would be the case with the MJ-12 documents and

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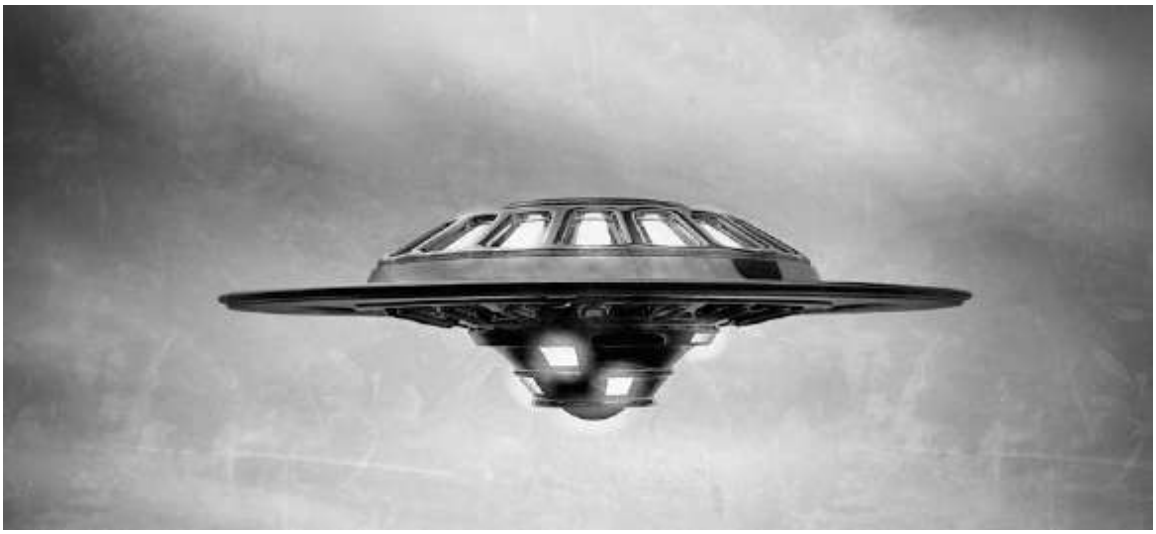

there would be positive results if the complete strikeup was not used for comparison. □at seems to be the case here.

Interestingly, and reported by Friedman, Black also said that the Truman signature was most likely a reproduction or a copy of a real signature. He wrote, “I reached this opinion because the ink line is homogenous and feathering is absent at the end of the lines.”

In other words, Black was con rming Tytel ’s opinion that the signature

had been copied from another source document and then copied to remove

the incriminating cut lines. □is is indicative of a forgery, but Friedman spins it, suggesting that the EBD might have been typed at the CIA and that the CIA would have been able to li□ the signature. Now, suggests Friedman, the CIA was the area where the documents were manufactured, which, of

course, doesn’t make them authentic. It just provides another suspect in the creation of the forgeries.

By 1981 the U.S. Air Force had announced it was no longer interested in

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investigating UFO reports, except when they were sighted over air force bases and other installations.

e Aquarius Telex

In what might be the initial step in the MJ-12 conspiracy, the rst reported mention of MJ-12 was in a teletype message that had been original y classi ed as “secret” and was dated November 17, 1980. is document was

al egedly sent from the AFOSI headquarters at Bol ing Air Force Base near Washington, D.C., to the 17th District AFOSI Office at Kirkland Air Force Base in New Mexico. It reports on the analysis of negatives from a UFO lm.

It was given to Moore by Richard Doty and Moore showed it to other researchers in January 1981, which establishes a timeline of the introduction of MJ-12 into the civilian consciousness.

e teletype message said, in al capital letters:

USAF NO LONGER PUBLICALLY ACTIVE IN UFO RESEARCH,

HOWEVER USAF STILL HAS INTEREST IN ALL UFO SIGHTINGS OVER

USAF

INSTALLATIONS/TEST

RANGES,

SEVERAL

OTHER

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, LED BY NASA, ACTIVELY INVESTIGATES

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[sic] LEGITIMATE SIGHTINGS THROUGH COVERT COVER … ONE

SUCH COVER IS UFO REPORTING CENTER, US COAST AND

GEODETIC SURVEY, ROCKVILLE, MD 20852. NASA FILTERS RESULTS

OF SIGHTINGS TO APPROPRIATE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS WITH

INTEREST IN THAT PARTICULAR SIGHTING. THE OFFICIAL US

GOVERNMENT POLICY AND RESULTS OF PROJECT AQUARIUS IS [sic]

OUTSIDE OFFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS AND WITH

RESTRICTED ACCESS TO 'MJ TWELVE' [emphasis added].

To understand this, it is necessary to understand another al eged conspiracy that developed near Kirkland AFB, which is in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Also in Albuquerque, in the 1970s, was a businessman and physicist, Paul Bennewitz, who began picking up bizarre messages on his radio equipment that he believed were communications from alien

creatures. He also believed that he saw UFOs over the Manzano Mountains

which housed a nuclear weapons facility and a test area. More importantly, he lmed some of these lights or objects.

Bennewitz told others about what he had seen, lmed, and heard, and

while some believed he was deluded, those out at Kirkland worried about

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what he had discovered. Not aliens communicating with one another or

their home world, but the low-frequency nets used in communication with American submarines in far-off areas and far underwater. □ey were afraid that he might inadvertently tip off the Soviets about the method of communication which would al ow the Soviets to develop a technology to

receive the messages.

On October 24, 1980, Bennewitz contacted the chief of Kirkland

security, Major Ernest Edwards, who directed him to the AFOSI and an NCO named Richard Doty. □at meeting resulted in a long report that said

Bennewitz had been studying UFOs for about □een months and that he had tapes that showed high periods of electrical magnetism being emitted from the Manzano/Coyote Canyon area, and that he had lms of the unidenti ed objects over that same location, taken in the same time period.

□e report concluded, saying, “A□er analyzing the data col ected by Dr.

BENNEWITZ, Mr. MILLER, a GS-15 [meaning a government service

employee and who was the Chief, Scienti c Advisor for Air Force Test and Evaluation Center at Kirkland and was a rather high-ranking civilian]

related the evidence clearly shows that some type of unidenti ed aerial objects were caught on lm; however, no conclusions could be made whether the objects pose a threat to Manzano/Coyote Canyon areas. Mr.

MILLER felt the electronical [sic] recording tapes were inconclusive and could have been gathered from several conventional sources. No

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sightings, other than these, have been reported in the area."

Bennewitz was then invited out to the base to present his evidence to another smal group of officers and scientists. Apparently, it didn't go al that wel because Doty told Bennewitz, a week later, that the AFOSI was no longer interested in his sightings and recordings.

Bennewitz, unhappy with these results, communicated with New

Mexico senator Harrison Schmitt, who asked the AFOSI what they planned

to do about Bennewitz's al egations. Schmitt, learning that no investigation was planned, cal ed Brigadier General Wil iam Brooksher, and while Harrison was satis ed with the results of the conversation with the general, Bennewitz was not. He enlisted the aid of New Mexico's other senator, Peter Domenici. Domenici talked rst with Doty and then Bennewitz. It was at

that point that Domenici lost interest so both of New Mexico's senators were out of the investigation.

Not only had alien bodies been recovered near Roswell, but in 1949, an

alien creature had been captured and housed at Los Alamos until it died in 1952.

It was about this same time that Moore was busy promoting his book

about the Roswel UFO crash. According to what he would later claim, he

did a radio show in Albuquerque and on his way out of the studio, the receptionist told him that he had a telephone cal . e cal er identi ed himself as someone who worked out at Kirkland. Moore arranged to meet

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the cal er in a nearby restaurant. □at man turned out to be Richard Doty.

□e players for this part of the drama were now al in place. Moore lived in Arizona but had met Doty, who claimed great inside knowledge of the

UFOs and the workings of the Air Force investigations. Bennewitz lived in Albuquerque and believed that he was watching UFOs and listening in to

their coded communications almost on a daily basis. Doty was stationed at Kirkland in Albuquerque and had interviewed Bennewitz about his UFO

discoveries so it could be said that he, Doty, also had an interest in UFOs.

According to what Moore would later claim, he was then recruited to assist AFOSI in their ongoing investigations of Bennewitz and they promised him that he would become privy to the highly classi ed information about UFOs that would turn the world on its head. Not only

had alien bodies been recovered near Roswel , but in 1949, an alien creature had been captured and housed at Los Alamos until it died in 1952.

To be treated to al this inside information, al Moore had to do was spy on Bennewitz for the AFOSI, or so he thought. He would also spy on the

Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO) which wouldn’t be

difficult because Moore was a member of the board of directors. APRO, of course, was interested in UFOs, and it had a more liberal policy about them that included research into alien encounters and alien abduction, which might suggest that the AFOSI had a greater interest in APRO than the other civilian UFO groups.

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Moore began to pass disinformation to Bennewitz. One of those documents, according to what Moore told Jerry Clark in a 1990 interview, was something Doty claimed he had gotten right off the teletype, meaning right out of the classi ed communications center at Kirkland, and was sharing with Moore even though that violated various laws and military regulations. □is was the Aquarius Telex. Doty showed it to Moore but didn't let him have a copy of it then.

Later Doty gave it to Moore to give to Bennewitz, but Moore said that he noticed that there had been changes to it. Moore said that NSA had been

changed to NASA, and there was that mention of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. □is, Moore speculated, was a retyped version of the real classi ed message. Moore, worried that the AFOSI would close down his inside information conduit, agreed to slip it to Bennewitz, but then held on to it for several weeks. Final y he handed it over to Bennewitz.

□is seemed to be a genesis of the Aquarius Telex, created by the government to fool and to discredit Bennewitz. Moore claimed to have seen the real original so that he knew this version was bogus. But there is another version of this story, or rather a reason for the retyped version of the Aquarius Telex that surfaced sometime later inside the UFO community.

And that turns everything else upside down.

A□er questions about the authenticity of the Aquarius Telex began to circulate in 1989, the late Richard Hal , of the Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR), confronted Moore about the it. Moore admitted, according to Hal , that he, Moore, had retyped the memo and pasted on the headings because the original was too poor to read easily. He said that he had created nothing and had added nothing to the text, but was just trying to improve the document so that it would be useful as an il ustration of the reality of MJ-12. Moore never offered the original, with the reference to MJ-12 on it, to prove this version of his

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story. Even a poor copy would have gone a long way to prove the truth.

Later stil , Moore denied that he had retyped the document. □at, however, doesn't matter in today's world. Nearly everyone agrees that this document, known universal y as the Aquarius Telex, is a fake. When MJ-12

is discussed, few even mention it. And the real point is that the rst

document to be publicly presented that mentioned MJ-12 is an admitted fake, which should taint the rest of the document pool.

Friedman, in fact, in a February 2001, letter, wrote of the Aquarius Telex,

"I am not sure what you mean by the Aquarius Telex and don't even mention in TOP SECRET/MAJIC [his book on the Majestic-Twelve] or in 'Final Report on Operation Majestic 12.'" He realized early on that this would not bode wel for the reality of MJ-12 and certainly didn't want to take the discussion into the realm of the Aquarius Brie ng.

Much later, as I attempted to learn more about the "Aquarius

Documents," I queried both Friedman and Robert Wood about them. Both

promised to respond to questions about the reality of Aquarius but both failed to supply any additional information about it.

□e Fakers

□ere is another aspect to MJ-12 that demands discussion and that is who

created MJ-12. Was it created by President Truman as a way to exploit the nd in Roswel ? Was it a way to reverse-engineer the alien technology for the bene t of the United States and the contractors that the government decided to help? Was it disinformation created to fool

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the Soviet Union or divert attention away from the truly mysterious UFOs? Or was it a creation by those inside the UFO community to entice other witnesses into the public arena?

Bil Moore might have inadvertently answered the questions in the early

1980s. He had said, to several of his col eagues, that he was thinking about creating a Roswel -type document that would suggest the crash was real and that the information was now in the public arena. He wanted to use this to convince reluctant witnesses that it was now legal for them to talk about what they had seen and done in 1947. □e release of the document would

show that the information was already in the public eye, so that anything they had to say was no longer classi ed and they wouldn't be prosecuted for revealing the formerly classi ed information.

In the real world, however, such reasoning is in error. □ose who have

been privy to classi ed information are not al owed to discuss it with those who do not have the proper security clearances. Even with the information out and printed in newspapers, discussed on television and radio, or talked about inside the UFO community, those who learned it through classi ed

contacts are not al owed to verify the validity of the information, or even suggest that they know anything about it. You might say that the phrase "I can neither con rm nor deny" was created for these circumstances.

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A black-and-white photo of a purported UFO hovering over homes in Passaic, New Jersey, in 1952. It later proved to be a fake.

In the real world, however, there are those who do not understand this,

even if they have been trained in the handling of classi ed information.

Captain W. O. “Pappy” Henderson, when he saw a story about the Roswel

crash in a supermarket tabloid, handed the paper to his wife, Sappho, and said, “I’ve wanted to tel you about this for years. Now that it’s in the paper, I guess I can.” But, of course, he wasn’t supposed to tel her because he had learned of the crash through classi ed sources.

And it is that attitude that might have led Moore to the idea that an official-looking document might persuade other, reluctant witnesses to share what they knew. Moore discussed the idea with several people, including Stan Friedman and Brad Sparks.

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It came as no surprise to some that Jaime Shandera, a close friend of Moore, received a document that suggested the crash at Roswel was real. In the few pages of the Eisenhower Brie ng Document available, it gave away enough to prove there had been a crash and a high-level cover-up of those

facts. It had been orchestrated by the White House, or in this case, President Truman, and access to the information was extremely limited.

Although there were always arguments about the authenticity of the documents, a major blow was delivered when Bob Pratt, a writer who had

an interest in UFOs, died. His papers, including much of his UFO research and his notes and correspondence on a novel about a UFO crash, were donated to MUFON. □ose documents added to the debate about MJ-12

and might have suggested a genesis of the idea.

According to Pratt's papers, he was working with Bil Moore and Richard

Doty on a ctional account of a mythical committee formed a□er the recovery of an alien spacecra□. According to Pratt's notes, he was discussing with Moore the dates and data that appear in the rst of the MJ-12

documents and talking about MJ-12 two years before he, or rather Shandera, received the 35mm lm with the Eisenhower brie ng on it. Moore, according to the notes now available as an example, said to Pratt:

Wel , that was '53 … ful y 11 months a□er the Robertson Panel, and there were al sorts of doings and goings on between the CIA and the NSC where the CIA was attempting to—it's not clear which way it was going, whether the NSC was attempting to get the CIA to take over things or whether it was vice versa. I've never been quite clear, on

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who was trying to in uence whom, but if you read that message it is very confusing. And especial y when a lot of those documents make reference to attachments which aren't there. So I have just sort of conjectured that the NSC got control of it at the point in time where Truman was ending his administration and Eisenhower was beginning his. If you stop and think about the point in time of the Robertson Panel, it happened just on that transition phase. See, Truman had not run for reelection in '52, in November. Eisenhower wins and takes office in January, January 20, and you've got the Robertson Panel deliberating in there, and it could wel be that somebody was trying to determine how to go on with the change in administrations, which would have presented a problem for that sort of a thing, especial y if it had gotten highly developed and the decision had already been made that this has got to be kept locked tighter than a drum. How then to deal with it with an incoming president whose reaction is not certain. And that's a point that nobody's ever brought up that I've heard in discussion.

Nobody's ever noticed that that date is very interesting.

□e early connection between the main players in this minor conspiracy is the paper Brad Sparks delivered at a recent MUFON conference. In it Sparks traced the history of MJ-12 in its rst incarnation as a novel to be written by Moore, Doty, and Pratt. Quite a bit of the MJ-12 stuff surfaced in that novel.

Using the information from Pratt's personal notes (a sample of which was quoted earlier) and interviews with various UFO researchers, Sparks, along with Barry Greenwood, concluded that MJ-12 is a hoax. Sparks believed it was a sanctioned disinformation campaign by the AFOSI with Moore and Shandera as the wil ing participants, or maybe the unwil ing dupes. □e evidence, whichever direction taken, leads clearly to hoax, regardless of the spin put on it or the reason for its creation.

Although there were always arguments about the authenticity of the documents, a major blow was delivered when Bob Pratt, a writer who

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had an interest in UFOs, died.

Sparks points out that this report is the most heavily footnoted article to ever appear in □e MUFON Symposium Proceedings. It contains facsimiles of many of the documents and it outlines the evidence clearly and concisely. It should drive the nal stake through the heart of MJ-12, but nothing in UFO

research ever sinks completely. □ere are always those who wil attempt to resurrect it by claiming that was a disinformation campaign that contains some “real” information. Al we have to do is gure what is real and what is fake.

Government Disinformation?

Sparks and Greenwood, in their MUFON Symposium paper, laid out the case that the creation of the MJ-12 documents wasn’t by UFO researchers, but was done with the knowledge and the guidance of AFOSI. Speci cal y, it was Richard Doty. □e chronology they created was slightly different than that which had been oating around in UFO circles since the EBD was rst released, suggesting that there was something cal ed the Aquarius Project and that it was the rst indication of alien contact.

According to Sparks and Greenwood, many in the UFO community,

when talking about the Aquarius Documents, think primarily of the Aquarius Telex and remember the only copy available is the “retyped”

version that Moore had been showing. But they wrote that the original Aquarius Documents, which included a 1977 brie ng to President Carter, might have also been the genesis of the Eisenhower Brie ng Document. □e

Carter brie ng, according to them, was an updated version of the EBD.

Sparks and Greenwood reported that in December 1981, Moore met

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with Doty and at that meeting Doty provided a great deal of information about crash retrievals and the bodies of the ight crews. □ese were the original Aquarius Documents and they had been prepared for Truman and

then modi ed for Eisenhower and later stil for other presidents.

By the time the brie ng was updated for Carter, it contained information that suggested that Jesus Christ was an alien and that the extraterrestrial creatures had been manipulating human DNA for thousands of years with

the goal of genetical y engineering the human race.

Moore was the rst to see the Carter Brie ng, and according to him, it

was early in March 1983 that he received a telephone cal inviting him, eventual y, to view the documents. Of course, the whole thing was l ed with cloak and dagger because UFO research requires a little spy mystery. Moore was given instructions that had to be fol owed precisely before the early evening meeting in a hotel room. □ere was a knock on Moore's motel door

and a stranger entered carrying a sealed package. He told Moore that he had nineteen minutes to review the material, that he could do anything he

wanted with it, and at the end of the time, the stranger would return expecting to receive the material back.

When you think about it, this is an absurd situation. □e stranger is supposedly handing Moore top-secret documents but isn't al owing him to

keep them. Instead, he leaves the room so that Moore could do whatever he wanted with them. Moore, not being a stupid man, took out a camera and

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began to photograph them. He used a quarter in each frame for scale. And then, fearing that the pictures would turn out poorly, he began to read each of the documents into a tape recorder, using the word “line” to denote the end of a line, and naming each punctuation mark so that he could, if necessary, reconstruct the documents as they had been typed. It turned out that it was a smart thing to do because the pictures were underexposed and poorly focused so the physical evidence, such as it was, was no longer available.

When the time was up, the stranger returned, took the papers, counted

them, stuffed them back into the envelope, and disappeared into the night.

Moore was le□ with only his poor-quality photographs and the sound of his own voice reading the documents on the tape. It seems absurd that if Moore was free to photograph them, why the stranger hadn’t just brought him photocopies original y? Why was he, Moore, limited to nineteen minutes to study them? And wasn’t this about the craziest leak that had ever ltered material from the government to the private sector? It seems to be l ed with

“movie” logic, but nothing that could be considered logic in the real world.

Moore, later describing the documents, suggested that they appeared to

be notes created to either prepare a classi ed report or they were notes taken during a classi ed brie ng. Moore also suggested that there was little that could be done to verify the information, which seems to be no surprise in the world today. In 1987, however, Moore and his partner Shandera decided that they would release some smal segments of this document to see if other researchers had seen them, or other documents with similar information, and recognized them or had copies of them. No one came forward.

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Other Classi ed Projects

□e Carter documents, as Moore described them, named a number of classi ed projects including Aquarius, Sigma, Snowbird, and Pounce. Little real information was provided and a great deal of it was hidden original y by Moore and Shandera. Of interest, however, is the section dealing with Project Sigma. According to that, contact with aliens had been established nearly two decades a□er the Roswel crash.

Sigma suggested that the rst positive contact was made on April 25, 1964, when an intel igence officer met aliens during a prearranged landing at Hol oman Air Force Base near Alamogordo, New Mexico. Exchange of information was in the alien's language, and that these sorts of meetings continue until today.

Snowbird, according to the documents, is the Air Force mission to test

y a "recovered" alien cra□. □is project is continuing in Nevada, which is a veiled reference to Area 51, the tales told by Robert Lazar, and the wild speculations of others. It should be noted here that although Moore suggested he received this information in 1983, the release of the data did not come until a□er Robert Lazar had suggested to KLAS television reporter George Knapp in Las Vegas that he, Lazar, had seen nine alien spacecra□ at Area 51. Lazar's story is questioned because of a lack of corroboration for it and an inability to verify much of Lazar's claimed education.

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William Moore.

What was disturbing about al this was that the source of the material,

once again, was Moore and Shandera. □ere was no place to go, no government agency to be questioned, no FOIA requests to be led that would provide corroboration, no real provenance for the documents other

than Moore’s unidenti ed stranger and his envelope of classi ed material and Moore’s voice on tape. Al we had was the integrity of Wil iam Moore and the fuzzy, poorly lighted photographs that no one saw.

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Linda Howe and the Carter Brie ng

But Moore wasn’t the only UFO researcher contacted by a government agent who supposedly knew the truth about UFOs, MJ-12, or crashed ying saucers and alien visitation. Linda Howe stumbled into the mix when she

was asked by Home Box Office (HBO) executives if she would produce a documentary on UFOs for them. In March 1983, she signed a contract.

While in New York during the negotiations with the HBO executives, she had dinner with Peter Gersten, who would later sue the government in an attempt to shake loose UFO-related les, and Pat Huyghe, a science writer with an interest in UFOs and who, with Dennis Stacy, would publish both □e Anomalist, a journal about the paranormal, and Anomalist Books,

which deal with a wide range of special-interest topics.

Dennis Stacy.

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Gersten told Howe about an Air Force OSI agent who was currently stationed at Kirkland by the name of Richard Doty. He claimed to know some very interesting things about UFO visitation and in uence on human

evolution and who might be wil ing to talk on camera about those things.

Gersten would attempt to set up some kind of a meeting between them, if Howe was interested. Of course she wanted to interview him.

Doty agreed to a meeting, and Howe ew to Albuquerque. □ere was al egedly some sort of mix-up at the airport, with Doty insisting that he had been there al the time but had missed her, and Howe insisting that no one had been there to meet her as promised. Howe knew an officer at Kirkland and cal ed him. He eventual y cal ed Doty, and Doty and Howe nal y got

together.

A new meeting was arranged and it was decided that they would meet at

the air base. Once they arrived at Kirkland, Doty took Howe to “his boss’

office,” and then arranged for her to sit in a speci c chair because “eyes can see through windows.” Howe believed she had been asked to move so that

hidden microphones would be better able to pick up her voice as they discussed UFOs and the documents she was about to see. It is just another example of the strangeness that surrounds MJ-12 and the sort of logic that permeates these tales.

Doty said to her, “My superiors have asked me to show you this.” He took an envelope from a drawer, opened it, and handed Howe several sheets of paper. He warned her that she could not copy them, could not make notes about them, and that she could only read them,

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which, of course, al owed for Doty to then deny he had shown her anything. Moore had been luckier when he was told that he could do anything he wanted as long as it only took him nineteen minutes to do it.

□e title of the document, or report, was A Briefing for the President of the United States on the Subject of Unidentified Flying Vehicles. Since there was no date on the report, nor was the president named, Howe had no way

of knowing for which president the report had been prepared. Later information would suggest the president was Jimmy Carter and this was what became known as the Aquarius Brie ng.

Peter Gersten.

□e documents that Howe read mentioned the July, 1947, Roswel crash,

as wel as another one near Roswel in 1949. It also suggested that an alien had survived one of these crashes and that it was taken to a

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“safe house” at Los Alamos National Laboratory, north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. □e aliens, according to this document, were smal , gray, and humanoid, which by 1983

and thanks to abduction researchers was becoming the standard description of the alien creatures, at least in the United States. According to Howe, the alien was befriended by an Air Force officer, and the creature had died on June 18, 1952.

□e document mentioned other crashes, including Kingman, Arizona,

in 1953, the Aztec, New Mexico, crash of 1948, and the Del Rio crash in 1950. □e bodies from each of these accidents were removed and sent on to various military and governmental facilities for study and the cra□ sent for reverse-engineering. □e metal ic wreckage was transported to Wright-Patterson for testing in the facilities there.

□e reason for believing that the document Howe saw was the Carter Brie ng was because it, too, mentioned Snowbird, Sigma, and Aquarius, as

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had the Carter documents seen by Moore earlier. In these new documents

there was also a mention of Project Garnet, which was designed to investigate alien in uences on human evolution.

According to Howe, these documents, and other unnamed government

sources, suggested the “grays” were from a nearby solar system and had manipulated the DNA of primates at various time intervals including 25,000, 15,000, 5,000, and 2,500 years ago. It also suggested that the grays created a being about 2,000 years ago to teach humanity about love and nonviolence. In other words, Jesus Christ was created by the aliens, at least according to these documents and Howe’s unnamed sources. □is, of course, annoyed any number of people when they heard about it.

□e document also hinted at another alien race known as the “Tal s” or

“Blonds” or Nordic types, which have also been reported during abductions.

□ey had been engaged in a three-hundred-year war with the grays and they were responsible for some of the Earthbased violence including the cattle mutilations reported in many parts of the country and some of the human

mutilations reported in other parts of the world.

□ere are several types of aliens that have been described, one of which is the

“Nordic” aliens, which are tall and rather handsome beings.

□e documents, again according to Howe, suggest that Project Blue Book was a public relations operation that was supposed to divert attention from the real investigative projects. Doty, in his conversations with Howe, mentioned MJ-12 but suggested the MJ

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stood for “Majority” rather than Majestic. Whatever the real name, it was a committee of twelve high-ranking government officials, scientists, and military officers who set the policy for the cover-up and the dissemination of disinformation about UFOs and government interest in them into the public mainstream.

□is could be seen as corroboration for what Moore had suggested about

his clandestine meetings with unidenti ed strangers in motel rooms. If Moore was making up his story, surely Linda Howe would not invent a similar story, or incorporate elements of Moore’s report into hers. It is clear from the timing of various events that Howe could not have heard about Moore’s activities because he wasn’t talking to much of anyone about them in 1983 and it would be much later that he began to talk at al .

But there is a link here and it is an important one. Moore knew Doty.

□ey had been working together for some time and, thanks to Bob Pratt, we know Doty and Moore had even col aborated on a novel together that included the elements of MJ-12. Pratt suggested that he, with Moore and an unidenti ed third man (Pratt believed it to be Doty) had written a novel in 1980-81in which MJ-12 gured prominently. And this means that there was

a link between Doty and Moore so the information supplied by Moore, of

his strange meeting in a hotel room, is not independent of Howe’s meeting with Doty. Both Moore and Howe knew Doty and that could tie the information together.

□ere is a dra□ of that novel in Pratt’s papers which are held by MUFON.

But some of that material is marked “Pratt Sensitive” so that it has not been released. Very few people have seen the dra□, but it apparently lays out the MJ-12 material and is the rst place that it arises.

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In fact, according to Greenwood and Sparks, Pratt suggested that they

do it as a novel because there was little in the way of veri cation of the

supposedly real material. Pratt, apparently, wanted to check the sources and the facts, but since that wasn’t possible given the al eged sources, he hesitated. He didn’t want to write a non ction book that might blow up in his face when chal enged by his fel ow journalists. □e way to do that was to use ction as a cover.

Aliens are o□en described as small, gray humanoids.

Majestic-12 Operations Manual

Another document, sent through the mail and on undeveloped

photographic lm so that there was no provenance for it, was a document

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labeled “Extraterrestrial Entities and Technology Recovery and Disposal.”

□is is, according to the front cover, the “Majestic-12 Group Special Operations Manual.”

Once again, a document about the al eged MJ-12 committee has come,

ultimately, from an unidenti ed source. It is a document that has been circulating in the UFO community for a number of years and is now part of the Majestic-Twelve Project and the mythology of MJ-12.

A study of the manual reveals that a great deal of work went into its construction. □is was no simple, quick, and dirty job. It suggests someone who is familiar with the military-style manuals that have been produced for decades. □e cover is impressive, looks authentic, and even includes a “seal”

to add to the visual impact. Unfortunately it is the seal of the Department of War, an organization that ceased to exist about seven years before the manual was printed.

□e manual itself is short, with the table of contents showing Appendix

III beginning on page thirty-one. □at appendix, according to the manual, contains the photographs. No copy of the manual in the hands of UFO

researchers contains any photographs, and in fact, most copies end on page twenty-three.

Again, as with the other MJ-12 documents, the manual is classi ed as

“Top Secret/Majic Eyes Only.” □ose inside the government and the military report that an “Eyes Only” classi cation mark is contradictory here. “Eyes Only” documents are created for a speci c person, to brief that person on a highly classi ed subject. A document might be created for the “Eyes Only”

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of the president, but it would not be put on an operations manual. Once the

“Eyes Only” recipient has read the document, it is usual y destroyed. □ere would be a single copy of it because it was created for the “Eyes Only” of a speci c person. It would defeat the purpose of a manual.

(T)he cover of the document violated the federal regulations in effect in April 1954. If the document is authentic, it should conform to those regulations.

A real mistake seems to be that the manual is classi ed as “Restricted.”

According to the Herbert L. Pankratz of the Eisenhower Library, “□e classi cation markings on the al eged MJ-12 document are not consistent with federal regulations for the marking of classi ed materials as of April 1954 [the date on the manual]. □e ‘Restricted’ classi cation category was terminated by executive order in November 1953 and would not have been

used on a document in April 1954. Federal regulations also require that the cover page re ect the highest level of classi cation for any material in the document. Since ‘Top Secret’ is a higher category than ‘Restricted,’ only ‘Top Secret’ should have appeared on the cover of the document.”

In other words, the cover of the document violated the federal regulations in effect in April 1954. If the document is authentic, it should conform to those regulations. □is document, like al the other MJ-12

documents, seems to be at variance with the proper government regulations in force at the time of its creation. Proponents wil claim that these regulations weren’t ironclad and that variations do exist. However, documents created at this level would be closely monitored and would adhere to the proper regulations, especial y since those

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regulations had just been changed. □e classi cations on the manual, like those on the other MJ-12 documents, are wrong and there is no reason for them to be wrong. It

smacks of hoax.

Pankratz continued in his letter of February 6, 1995, saying, “In addition, we have no evidence in our les that a security classi cation referred to as

‘MAJIC EYES ONLY’ ever existed. Executive Order 10501 was signed by President Eisenhower on November 5, 1953. It set up three classi cation categories: ‘Top Secret,’ ‘Secret,’ and ‘Con dential.’ A fourth category,

‘Restricted Data’ (not the same as ‘Restricted’), was established by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 and it is used only with regard to nuclear weapons.” □e manual, then, contains an obsolete classi cation mark. □at is a second major mistake made by the creator of the document.

□ere is no doubt that the MJ-12 Operations Manual is nothing more than a fake.

As with the rest of the Majestic-Twelve Project papers, the manual contains many anachronisms. On page 4, for example, the manual instructs the retrieval units on how to keep the press and the public from learning about the alien cra□. □ey suggest explaining the sightings and crashes as

“meteors, downed satel ites, weather bal oons….” But on the date that the manual was issued, April 1954, there were no arti cial satel ites in orbit and a suggestion by military officials that one had been recovered would have generated more press interest, not less.

It is clear that someone with a great deal of time, an intimate knowledge of the UFO phenomenon, and a computer with good word processing and

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graphics programs created the MJ-12 manual. □at person, however, had not worked with classi ed material, nor did he or she understand the system. □at explains why the mixed classi cations are found on the front cover of the manual. It also explains why an obsolete term “Restricted” was used. □at was an attempt to conform to the original documents.

□e opinion that the manual is a fake is shared by a number of researchers. In March 1999, a coalition of UFO researchers from the Center for UFO Studies, Project 1947, and the Fund for UFO Research issued a joint statement about the Operations Manual. □e joint statement said, in part, “We believe this document to be a hoax; a deliberate fake designed to mislead the public and to plant false information in the UFO research community by person or persons whose motives are unknown.”

□ose who signed the joint statement included Don Berliner, an aviation

writer and historian who had been singled out by the perpetrators of the hoax and who was a member of the Fund for UFO Research. Jan L. Aldrich,

a retired Army master sergeant who had been an intel igence NCO

(sergeant), a classi ed-document custodian, and a top-secret control officer, also signed the statement. □omas P. Deuley, a retired naval officer who had been a crytological officer and a Communications Security (COMSEC) custodian, was another of those who signed the statement. □ey were joined

by Dick Hal , former chairman of FUFOR, and Mark Rodeghier, the current director of CUFOS.

Each brought an expertise to the table, and each reviewed the

Operations Manual in light of his expertise. Al concluded that the document was a fake. □is was a cross-section of the UFO community and

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included Berliner, who had original y received the manual. □eir conclusion that the manual was a hoax was not quali ed in any fashion.

□ere is no doubt that the MJ-12 Operations Manual is nothing more

than a fake. It does not conform to the regulations, it contains inaccurate and anachronistic information, and it is incomplete. □e manual should be rejected as the fake it is.

Majestic-Twelve Project

When it began to seem that the last had been heard of MJ-12, that al the documents that had been published contained some fatal aw that led to the conclusion that MJ-12 was a hoax, a new round was started. More documents were found, more documents were identi ed and published, new

sources came forward, and new questions were asked.

Although there had been rumors that a new package of documents had

surfaced, it wasn’t until October 11, 1998, that Dr. Robert Wood and his adult son, Ryan, announced that they had received a large package that contained dozens of such documents.

□e new group of about forty documents contained about 125 pages of

information about MJ-12 and its al eged operations, but it also contained a few documents that had already made the rounds.

Like al the others, this group of documents surfaced without a provenance. Wood told researchers at the Omega Communications

conference hosted by John White that he had received them from a California-based researcher named Timothy Cooper who had become an

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“expert” on using the Freedom of Information Act to acquire UFO-related

material. While that was interesting, it appeared that, according to Cooper, he had received most of the new documents from a third party identi ed

only as Cantwheel. It was not explained exactly who Cantwheel was or how he had acquired so much MJ-12 material. Cantwheel has, of course, since

died, and is therefore no longer available to answer questions.

According to the documents, Field Order 862 was issued by President

Truman’s Office of Assistant Chief of Staff and ordered the Interplanetary Phenomenon Unit (IPU) to head to New Mexico. A seven-page document

dated July 9, 1947, subtitled “Extraordinary recovery of fal en objects in New Mexico,” provides descriptions of the debris recovered and details where the various pieces of debris were sent.

at same document describes the deaths of some of the men involved

in the retrieval operation. Four technicians who were on the site became extremely sick during the recovery and three of them died of heavy bleeding

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a□er being taken to the hospital. One of the military policemen on the scene later committed suicide.

Another of the documents suggested that Nathan Twining investigate the crash. In a three-page report, Twining suggested that the cra□ was powered by “atomic engines” and that it was doughnut-shaped and about thirty- ve feet in diameter. □is seems to be a reference to the discredited Maury Island case and the object described by the al eged witnesses.

□e longest of these documents is the MJ-12 Operations Manual which

had original y been sent to Berliner. □e Woods’ investigation uncovered nothing new about the Operations Manual. □ey do argue, however, that the anachronistic use of Area 51 might be appropriate. According to them, Area 51 referred to a map location that could wel have been in use prior to 1954

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when the manual was al egedly written. □ey don't explain how the material would be sent to a base that hadn't been built in 1954 even if there was a map reference on it.

Investigators examine the site of an alien landing in Socorro, New Mexico.

One of the most interesting of the documents is dated September 24, 1947, which might be part of the Eisenhower Brie ng that was not included in the rst leaks of that document. It identi es a new acronym for the UFOs, referring to them as "unidenti ed lenticular aerodyne technology" or ULAT.

Clearly ULAT means alien spacecra□.

According to that document, ULAT-1 had been recovered at a location

southeast of Socorro, New Mexico. □at seems to imply that part of the Barney Barnett story is accurate, though the crash was not far to the west on the Plains of San Agustin as original y believed, but rather closer to Socorro.

□is could be seen as a thin corroboration to the now discredited Santil i autopsy lm.

□ose who believe in the authenticity of MJ-12, and Robert and Ryan Wood are numbered among them, have found what they believe to be proofs of the authenticity of these new documents. □ey noticed that in some of the documents there was a raised "z," that is, every "z" is slightly above the position of the other letters printed on the same line.

A number of authenticated documents printed by the Government

Printing Office (GPO) in that same year seem to exhibit the " ying z." To some, this suggested the documents are authentic.

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But many problems, suggesting fraud, have also appeared. First, and foremost, are the claims that no one knows where the documents originated.

□ere is no way to use Freedom of Information to acquire authentic copies of the documents. □ere is no government agency which wil admit that they are the source of the documents, or that copies of the documents are stored at their offices. □e trail runs from the Woods to Cooper to the dead Cantwheel, and then no farther.

In a similar circumstance, UFO researchers learned of a project code named Moon Dust. Part of the Moon Dust mission was investigation of foreign UFO sightings. □ere were documents, but Air Force officers denied that such a project ever existed. □e difference, however, is there is a provenance of some of the Moon Dust documents. □ey came from the Department of State and other researchers, using FOIA requests, were able to obtain them. On many, in the block for the “subject,” there were the code

words “Moon Dust.” It was clear that there had been a secret project with that code name and Air Force denials about it were erroneous. In other words, there was a provenance and others could nd the same or different authentic documents that discussed Moon Dust. No one, however, has been

able to verify the code name Majestic-Twelve or MJ-12 or any of the various abbreviations of it. □e documents keep surfacing, inside the UFO

community, with neither the provenance nor the pedigree needed to be convincing.

As with the Operations Manual, there are anachronisms in the new batch of documents. First, in a document entitled “1st Annual Report of the MAJESTIC TWELVE PROJECT,” there is a mention of a retro-virus (with a

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hyphen in it). □is term, in a document dated 1952, caught the eyes of a number of researchers. Al wondered about when retro virus had entered the language.

UFO researchers began a quick survey of the relevant scienti c literature and realized that the term retro virus (a group of viruses that, unlike al other viruses and cel ular material, carry their genetic ngerprint in the RNA) didn't exist in 1952. □e mechanism of the retro virus was discovered by Howard Temin, who began work on the problem in 1960. Apparently, another scientist, David Baltimore, working at MIT had independently duplicated Temin's work and they published a joint article on June 27, 1970

in Nature. It was a□er this article that the term "retro-virus" entered the lexicon. □e question to be asked was the same question that had been asked in the past. How could a paper produced in 1952 make reference to a term that did not exist in 1952?

□ose wishing to believe in the MJ-12 documents found what they believed to be a logical explanation for this problem. Wood, in searching for a possible alternative use of the term, including the hyphenated "retro-virus"

that might have been used prior to 1970, found a number of scienti c articles that mentioned retrograde organisms that predated the 1952 Annual Report. Wood wrote that Robert Green, as early as 1935, had suggested that al viruses were retrograde organisms.

Wood wrote, "One reasonable scenario is that the writer of this section

of the 1st Annual Report of the MAJESTIC TWELVE PROJECT, perhaps

being obsessed with jargonizing, may have simply shortened the term

'retrograde virus' to retro-virus.'"

Others didn't nd the suggestion reasonable. To them, the use of retro

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virus, with or without the hyphen, suggested a document that had not been created in 1952 but much later, and that was, therefore, fraudulent.

Another of the anachronisms was the position of General Hoyt S.

Vandenberg in 1952. □e 1st Annual Report, because of what it mentions,

had to be written in either late 1951 or in 1952. □e cover page lists one of the members, Gen. Hoyt Vandenberg, as the “Vice Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.” □e problem was that Vandenberg was Vice Chief of Staff in 1947 when MJ-12 was al egedly created, but by the summer of 1948, he

had been promoted to the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. □ere is no way that he would have been listed on any official document created in 1951 or later as a vice chief of staff.

Stil another anachronism is found in a document dated “February 1948.” In the lower le□ corner of the memo, there is a list of agencies that are to receive the document. Listed among those is “USAFOSI.” □e problem is

that in February 1948, the Air Force Office of Special Investigation (designated as AFOSI) did not exist. Worse for the creator of the document, it was never cal ed the USAFOSI.

What these researchers are suggesting is that some information,

hopelessly out of place or inaccurate, was included in each of the MJ-12

documents.

□ese anachronisms, then, were inserted as a way of limiting the damage

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done if the documents leaked into the public arena. □ere are those who have argued that these “poison pil s” have been built into the MJ-12

documents to “destroy” them.

What these researchers are suggesting is that some information,

hopelessly out of place or inaccurate, was included in each of the MJ-12

documents. When they were leaked into the public arena, these “poison pil s” would be found and that would suggest, to skeptics and disbelievers,

that the documents were fraudulent. □e tactic, according to the researchers, is wel known in intel igence circles that routinely create disinformation. It is the purpose of that disinformation to discredit the document or the individual who has it.

□e problem with the thinking is that this sort of thinking is slightly off-kilter. Most disinformation is not created to self-destruct. It is created to take the enemy, whoever that enemy might be, in the wrong direction for as long as possible. For it to self-destruct would be to defeat its purpose.

However, if a leak is found that does compromise true classi ed information, then bad information is o□en pumped into that leak with the hope that al information retrieved from that source wil the be discredited.

But that is not the same as disinformation or the same as what is seen here.

If MJ-12 was disinformation, as some have suggested, the effort would be made to make sure that nothing was found to suggest that it was fraudulent because that would defeat the purpose. Besides, those creating it would have enough intimate knowledge of the

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situation to keep from making basic mistakes. They would know what the situation was.

The Majestic-Twelve Project, with its huge release of documents, should

be taken for what it is. Without a proper provenance, with the anachronisms that dot it, with the information that seems to embrace almost every aspect of the Roswel case, it simply must be considered at best dubious and at worst, another hoax.

Summation

So, the questions become: Who faked the MJ-12 documents and why would they do it?

The answer seems to be two-fold. First culprit is the government, in the

guise of the Air Force, but more speci cal y, Richard Doty, operating with the knowledge of his superiors. According to Greenwood and Sparks, as outlined in their 2007 MUFON Symposium paper, “AF Regulations lay out a

vast array of such covert warfare operations that are authorized for AFOSI to carry out, even against law-abiding U.S. citizens and organizations.”

Greenwood and Sparks reported, “But the purposes had been previously

revealed by Doty to Moore, then to Pratt … where Moore explained how the disinformation operation against ufology works.”

They then quoted from the twenty- ve page manuscript that Pratt made

from his interview with Moore. Moore told Pratt, “How many people would

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it take working ful time to sow confusion, keep the UFO groups off balance…? It wouldn't take many … one in each of the three major organizations [which at that time would have been MUFON, CUFOS, and

FUFOR, but in the past would have been NICAP, APRO, and MUFON] and

one for the smal er organizations that were deemed to be worth the trouble

… they could quite effectively keep everybody off balance by feeding disinformation or feeding little bit[s] of truth to get somebody off on another track…."

□e point that Moore was making, or it might be said that Doty was making, was that it wouldn't have to be a big operation with many people involved. It would take a little effort to get those who dealt with the press to maintain an attitude of debunking, meaning Air Force spokesmen and governmental officials saying there wasn't anything to these sightings because in al their investigations they found nothing at al . In fact, a perfect example of that was the 2010 White House response to the petition asking for a release of information about alien visitation. □e White House made a statement that there wasn't anything to these ideas of UFOs and aliens, and nothing further was going to be said about it.

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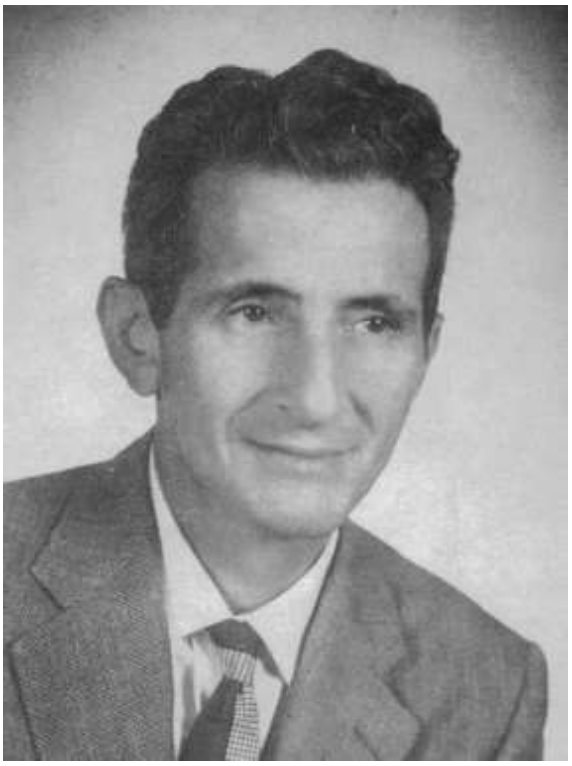

As another example, Moore said that when NICAP began to have some

success with its cal for congressional hearings, and the threat to the Air Force was growing, they simply derailed NICAP at that point.

Moore said, “And now al of a sudden we nd out that their board was

riddled with CIA people [including Roscoe Hil enkoetter and Karl P ock who said he had been associated with the CIA and who was a member of the Washington, D.C., NICAP committee] and the guy who replaces Keyhoe as

director [Col. Joseph Bryan III, USAFR] has questionable connections.…”

Orfeo Angelucci

Moore continued, saying “you encourage an Adamski [George Adamski

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who claimed to have met Venusians] and a Richard Andolucci [Orfeo Angelucci, another contactee] … you encourage any number of those people

… they don't take much encouragement…. Al they need is a little attention

… and they do the job for you without you having to pay them. □e same

sense with Phil Klass. □ey don't have to put him on the payrol . □ey just need to encourage him to continue what he's doing. So, any time he ags in his effort they dump a little more seemingly bona de debunking

information on him that 'it couldn't be so because'—and he takes it from there. Why pay him?"

You might say that the investigation of Newton and Aztec is an example

of this. □e Air Force tel ing him there is nothing to it but to keep doing what he is doing, which is leading people in the wrong direction. □at is, if you accept Karl P ock's information about the Newton diary.

Moore made a similar point in 1989, and did virtual y the same thing

when he confessed at the MUFON Symposium in Las Vegas that he had been an unpaid agent of the AFOSI. He warned the audience, "Every time

one of you repeats an unveri ed or unsubstantiated bit of information without qualifying it as such, you are contributing to the process…."

At that point everything seemed to have come ful circle. Moore said that he had been working with the AFOSI so that he could learn the truth about alien visitation. His contact was Doty. It was Doty who had briefed him on the Aquarius Project, as he, Doty, had briefed Linda Howe. It was Doty, Moore, and Shandera who, with the aid of Pratt,

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were going to write a novel about MJ-12 because, according to Pratt, they didn't have the evidence to do a non ction book. It was Moore and Shandera who received the MJ-12

documents in the mail without a return address, but with a postmark of Albuquerque, and Doty lived in Albuquerque.

So with al this information, the question is stil whether MJ-12 was government disinformation or was it a hoax cooked up by someone else for some other reason?

Back a decade or more, I was col ecting videotaped testimony from Roswel witnesses for the Fund for UFO Research's oral history project. I was in California with Stan Friedman and we, quite natural y, began to discuss MJ-12. I had heard from a couple of people that Bil Moore, one of those who released the MJ-12 documents into the public arena in 1987, had been talking about creating a "Roswel " document to try to shake things loose.

□e plan was to put out a document that would closely mirror the situation in 1947 and force those involved in the cover-up to reveal part of it….

Moore, I had heard, thought he had taken the investigation as far as he could without some sort of revelation or dramatic discovery. □e plan was to put out a document that would closely mirror the situation in 1947 and force those involved in the cover-up to reveal part of it as they attempted to learn who knew what and how much of it they knew.

Friedman con rmed for me that it was true. Bil Moore had told him the

same thing. But when the MJ-12 documents surfaced, Friedman thought nothing of that conversation and the fact that the documents had not gone to Moore but to an unknown lm producer whose only tie to the UFO

community seemed to be Bil Moore.

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Barry Greenwood had heard the same thing and reported in his Just Cause newsletter of September 1989, on page ten, “A□er Moore released the rst wave of MJ-12 documents in 1987, CAUS [Citizens Against UFO

Secrecy], and particularly Larry Fawcett, spoke to Moore about cooperation in researching the story in the form of ling FOIA requests, etc. as an effort to esh out information. Moore rejected the offer, adding that he wanted to

‘put bread on my table.’“

But disinformation implies that it was an official operation of some kind and in this case the overseeing agency is AFOSI, at least to Sparks’ way of thinking. I’m not sure it was a sanctioned mission; it might have been more of Doty seeing a gravy train and leaping aboard with his buddy Bil Moore than it was any kind of planned AFOSI operation. At this point, it real y doesn’t matter because in either case, the conclusion of hoax is the important one. Government disinformation or opportunism by Doty and Moore makes no difference in the end. □ey both lead to hoax and to more

than two-and-a-half decades of chasing the documents.

□ose who believe that MJ-12 is authentic o□en point out that to fake

these documents, the forger would have to have a great deal of complex historical knowledge. It wouldn’t be something that someone on the outside could do, meaning here, of course, outside the government agencies that deal with the UFOs. □is was an argument for the creation being the work of insiders.

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In the past I had argued that Stan Friedman had suggested that he, and

Bil Moore, did have this knowledge. In □e Roswel Report, edited by George M. Eberhart for the Center for UFO Studies and published in 1991, Friedman had written, "□e simple fact of the matter is that Moore, Shandera, and I had already picked up on al the names on the list prior to the receipt of the Im (except for Dr. Donald Menzel) as a result of the many days spent in historical archival research that begun a decade ago because of the Roswel incident…. We had noted who was where in early July 1947

when the Roswel incident occurred…."

But Stan's research, along with that of Moore, was even more in-depth.

Karl P ock, in his column "P ock Ptalk," published in Jim Moseley's semiserious and periodical y published Saucer Smear, wrote, "In 1976, ufologist Brad Sparks discovered Menzel had a UFO sighting near Alamogordo, New

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Mexico, when he was in the area in 1949…. □en in 1977, Sparks circulated a paper on Menzel, his presence in New Mexico in the 1940s, and his sighting and his distortions and outright attempts to suppress it."

Karl Pflock

P ock noted here that one of Sparks' readers was Friedman, showing that Friedman was aware of Menzel's ufological history. □at Friedman knew about this is important.

P ock continued, "In 1982, Canadian engineer-ufologist Wilbert Smith

notes on his 1950 indirect interview of American scientist Robert Sarbacher surfaced. Smith al eged Sarbacher … had con rmed crashed saucers were being studied by a super-secret U.S. government group…."

P ock wrote next, "According to my sources, Friedman instantly

concluded the group had been established to study the Roswel saucer and bodies and ngered Menzel as the most likely leader of the out t because he was 'right on the scene' when the crash occurred…. Friedman quickly worked up a list of probable members of the 'Sarbacher-Smith group,' which my sources say included not only Menzel but al [emphasis added] on the

EBD MJ-12 roster. Over the next couple of years, Friedman quietly but enthusiastical y touted his theory about Menzel and the saucerstudy panel to ufological col eagues."

□en, of course, Moore and Shandera supposedly received the MJ-12

material anonymously in the mail in 1984. Moore and Shandera were, at the time, working with Friedman on the Roswel case. In fact, Moore wrote □e Roswel Incident, published in 1980, and Friedman has complained ever since that the promised big acknowledgment for him wasn't in the book.

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And nal y, in “1987, they [meaning Friedman and Moore] went public

with the EBD and MJ-12 at the National UFO Conference. Friedman made

much of his ‘Who’da thunk it?’ surprise on discovering Menzel’s involvement, uttering nary a word about his earlier notions.”

So, the evidence is there that Moore and Friedman had the knowledge to

cook up MJ-12. Friedman bragged about knowing who was where but there

is no evidence that he had anything to do with the EBD or any of the MJ-12

documents. He did the research on the various individuals and passed al that along to his then-partner Moore. □e evidence does point a nger at

Moore, and by extension, Shandera.

Philip Klass noted that Moore employed a bizarre dating system that was

a hybrid of the military format and the civilian method but which is also

used in Europe. He used a zero as a placeholder in single-digit dates and a comma a□er the month and before the year as in 06 December, 1947. □e

true military format has neither the zero nor the comma. □is points another nger at Moore as one of those who created MJ-12. And, since he

knew Doty, who was in the Air Force at the time and familiar with the handling and marking of classi ed documents, Moore could have

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created MJ-12 with Doty's help. □is was Klass' theory.

MJ-12 boils down to a conspiracy to either dump disinformation on UFO researchers to force them into research paths away from the truth, or it was a creation of speci c UFO researchers in an attempt to persuade witnesses, in this case former military personnel, to share secrets with them about the Roswel case. Either way, MJ-12 was a conspiracy to mislead, and it has been working quite wel since the mid-1980s.

A□er the summer of 1947, with ying saucer reports dominating the rst

few weeks, with stories of alien ships crashing, and with reports from

military and civilian pilots, the government and the military took notice.

Documentation available in the Project Blue Book les suggests that highranking military officers and civilian government leaders were concerned about possible alien missions. If the ying saucers represented an alien race, then invasion of Earth might be the objective. □ey simply did not know what to expect.

It might be said that there was no real effort, in the beginning, to hide the truth. □ey were responding to the sudden appearance of physical cra□

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that outperformed anything in the military inventory. But during that summer the War Department was undergoing a reorganization, as were other elements of the federal government, and this added to the confusion.

Too much was happening too fast.

Ed Ruppelt, writing in □e Report on Unidentified Flying Objects, said,

"□e paperwork of that period also indicated the confusion that surrounded the investigation; confusion almost to the point of panic. □e brass wanted an answer quickly, and people were taking off in al directions."

By late summer, the panic had eased slightly as speculation about the nature of UFOs changed into something that had to do with the Soviet Union. It was thought that their German scientists, captured at the end of the war, were doing better than our German scientists. Ruppelt reported that

with UFOs being seen near our testing centers at Muroc Air Force Base (later Edwards AFB), the White Sands Proving Ground, and atomic bomb

plants, the efforts to identify the objects became more concentrated.

Orders were issued to investigate al UFO sightings and gather as much

information as possible. □e FBI was asked for help to investigate the backgrounds of witnesses, and J. Edgar Hoover agreed as long as the FBI was given access to al discs recovered.

□e Hoover Note

Hoover was referring to a case from Shreveport, Louisiana, dated July 7, 1947. According to a report dated 23 July 1947, the intel igence office at Barksdale Field near Shreveport had received a report that a ying disc had been located, or crashed, in Shreveport. A

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witness told the Army officers that he (a man named Harston but not further identi ed) “had heard the

disc whirling through the air and had looked up in time to see it when it was approximately two hundred feet in the air and coming over a sign board adjacent to the used car lot where he was standing … [witness] stated that smoke and re were coming from the disc and that it was traveling at a high rate of speed and that it fel into the street….”

□e fol owing day, the Army investigators talked to another witness who

told them in an interview “that he had made the disc [created it] in order to play a joke on his boss and that the starter had been taken from a uorescent light and two condensers from electric fans.”

□e witness described how he put it together and then “sailed the disc in front of his boss’s car, but that his boss failed to notice the disc and drove away. [□e witness] further stated that some man (presumably Harston) saw the disc fal into the street … he [the witness] was of the opinion that anyone who examined the disc could readily tel that it was not dangerous, and that it was the work of a practical joker.”

With that the Army closed their investigation. But the FBI was stil interested. □e FBI document covers the same information but added a single detail. According to the FBI document, “Harston stated that the disc made a sound when traveling through the air similar to a policeman’s whistle and that the smooth side was toward the earth while in ight.”

□ere was a handwritten note that said, “10 July 47—Maj. Carlau (US Br

of ID) says FBI advises this was a hoax.”

It was about this time, in July 1947, that the Army asked the FBI for assistance in investigating the ying saucers, or rather, and more importantly, for help in investigating the witnesses. J. Edgar Hoover

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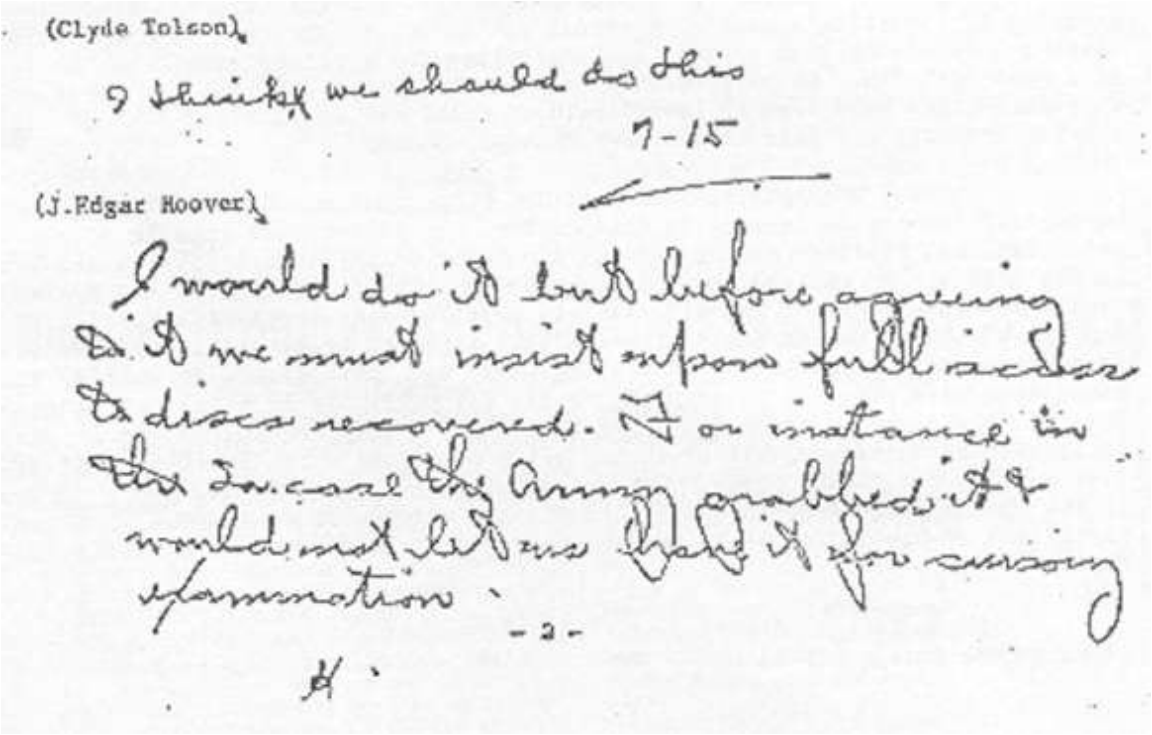
responded to the request which came from the Army Air Forces' Brigadier


(Clyde Tolson)

I think we should do this

7-15

(J. Edgar Hoover)

I would do it but before agreeing to it we must insist upon full access to discs recovered. For instance in the La. case the Army grabbed it & would not let us have it for cursory examination.

- 2 -

H.

General George F. Schulgen, at the time Chief of Requirements Intel igence Branch, by writing, "I would do it but before agreeing to it we must insist upon ful access to discs recovered. For instance in the La. case the Army grabbed it and would not let us have it for cursory examination."

□e question that surfaced was what did the "La. case" mean? Skeptics

and debunkers pointed to the Shreveport recovery. □at seemed to answer

the question.

□e note written by J. Edgar Hoover about helping with the UFO investigation.

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□e problem was that the case le for the Shreveport crash is readily available in Project Blue Book les. □e FBI was not cut out of the case and the Army didn't grab the saucer or refuse to al ow the FBI to inspect it. In fact, just the opposite is true. □e FBI had seen the le, seen the disc, seen the pictures taken of it, and even pronounced that it was a hoax.

In 1947 the ying saucers appeared in a domestic environment which, to

Hoover, suggested that the FBI was the agency responsible for gathering intel igence about them. □e Army Air Forces, however, charged with the defense of the skies over the United States, thought otherwise. □at would give rise to a "turf war." □at is, Hoover believed that the Army was

attempting to usurp his authority by investigating the UFO sightings inside the United States. He seemed to believe the FBI had been "cut out of the loop." He wasn't going to have another agency tromping over the ground he believed belonged to the FBI.

□e Hoover document, then, is understandable in the context of the times. Hoover was ghting a turf war with the Army Air Forces, trying to pry into what military officers considered their areas of responsibility.

Hoover wanted to be on the inside of the discussion. He would require information in response to his assistance in background investigations of those who saw ying saucers. From Hoover's point of view, this was empire building and had nothing to do with the reality of ying saucers.

It seems odd that Hoover would mention a crashed disc and a

recovered disc so casually.

□ere is another issue here, and that is if the La. note actual y referred to Shreveport. Looking at the les, it certainly does seem to point in that direction. It seems odd that Hoover would mention a crashed

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disc and a recovered disc so casual y. It would seem that he knew something else and wanted to make sure that he was involved because if there was a crashed disc and it was not of Soviet origin, and Hoover was probably sure it wasn't American made, it had to be from another planet. Hoover, who might never have suggested something so far out to anyone, might have privately thought it could be possible. He didn't want to miss out on the biggest story of the mil ennium. □e fact that Hoover's note is ambiguous only deepens the mystery rather than solving it.

Brigadier General George F. Schulgen's Other

Letter

As he was soliciting the aid of the FBI, Schulgen was also trying to nd out what was happening in a physical sense. He wrote to the Air Materiel Command, then at Wright Field in Ohio, asking for their analysis of the situation. □at is, he sent along the les of some sixteen UFO sightings, though he mentioned eighteen. □ese were the best sightings to date; they included one from May 17, 1947, and ended with one on July 12. Five of the cases were made by military pilots, including one from Maxwel Field, Alabama, by four pilots on June 28. Six of the sightings involved civilian pilots, including the July 4 sighting by Captain Smith and his United Airlines crew.

Schulgen's estimate contained conclusions based on the information contained in it. His conclusion was that there wasn't much of a mystery about ying saucers. To them, the objects were mechanical. □ey just didn't know who was ying them or rather, to which country they belonged. But,

since there seemed to be no real investigation giving the number of sightings, their conclusion was that the ying saucers were American and highly classi ed. Nothing else explained the lack of concern by those at higher levels of the military chain of command.

AMC, commanded by Lieutenant General Nathan Twining, rather than

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acknowledging that he, and AMC, knew al about the ying saucers, sent a letter that probably surprised those who received it. He said that the phenomenon was something and that it should be investigated. □at letter

has been in the hands of UFO researchers for decades.

In response to Schulgen, Twining, or rather members of his staff who prepared the document for his signature, wrote:

1. As requested by AC/AS-2 there is presented below the considered opinion of this Command concerning the so-cal ed “Flying Discs”. □is opinion is based on interrogation report data furnished by AC/AS-2 and preliminary studies by personnel of T-2 and Aircra□ Laboratory, Engineering Division T-3. □is opinion was arrived at in a conference between personnel from the Air Institute

of Technology, Intel igence T-2, Office, Chief of Engineering Division, and the Aircra□, Power Plant and Propel er Laboratories of Engineering Division T-3.

2. It is the opinion that:

a. □e phenomenon reported is something real and not visionary or ctitious.

b. □ere are objects probably approximately the shape of a disc, of such appreciable size as to appear to be as large as manmade aircra□.

c. □ere is a possibility that some of the incidents may be caused by natural phenomena, such as meteors.

d. □e reported operating characteristics such as extreme rates of climb, maneuverability (particularly in rol), and action which must be considered evasive when sighted or contacted by friendly aircra□ and radar, lend belief to the possibility that some of the objects are control ed either manual y, automatical y or remotely.

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e. □e apparent common description of the objects is as fol ows:

(1) Metal ic or light re ecting surface.

Page two begins with the fol owing heading: basic Ltr fr CG, AMC WF

to CO, AAF, Wash. D.C. subj “AMC Opinion Concerning ‘Flying Discs.’“

(2) Absence of trail, except in a few instances when the object apparently was operating under high performance conditions.

(3) Circular or el iptical in shape, at on bottom and domed on top.

(4) Several reports of wel kept formation ights varying from three to nine objects.

(5) Normal y no associated sound, except in three instances a substantial rumbling roar was heard.

(6) Level ight speeds normal y above 300 knots are estimated.

f. It is possible within the present U.S. knowledge—provided extensive detailed development is undertaken—to construct a piloted aircra□ which has the general description of the object in subparagraph (e) above which would be capable of an approximate range of 7000 miles at subsonic speeds.

g. Any developments in this country along the lines indicated would be extremely expensive, time consuming and at the considerable expense of current projects and therefore, if directed, should be set up independently of existing projects.

h. Due consideration must be given the fol owing:

(1) □e possibility that these objects are of domestic origin—the product of some high security project not known to AC/AS-2 or this command.

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(2) □e lack of physical evidence in the shape of crash recovered exhibits which would undeniably prove the existence of these objects.

(3) □e possibility that some foreign nation has a form of propulsion possibly nuclear, which is outside of our domestic knowledge.

3. It is recommended that:

a. Headquarters, Army Air Forces issue a directive assigning a priority, security classi cation and Code Name for a detailed study of the matter to include the preparation of complete sets of al available and pertinent data which wil then be made available to the Army, Navy, Atomic Energy Commission, JRDB, the Air Force Scienti c Advisory Board Group, NACA, and the RAND

and NEPA projects for comments and recommendations, with a preliminary

report to be forwarded within 15 days of receipt of the data and a detailed report therea□er every 30 days as the investigation develops. A complete interchange of data should be effected.

4. Awaiting a speci c directive AMC wil continue the investigation within its current resources in order to more closely de ne the nature of the phenomenon. Detailed Essential Elements of Information wil be formulated immediately for transmittal thru channels.

N.F. Twining

Lieutenant General, U.S.A.

Commanding

□is response must have surprised Schulgen and his subordinates. □ey

had assumed that those higher up would have known what was happening.

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ey had assumed that the ying saucers were some kind of top-secret project and they would be told to ignore it. Aer al , if it was a top-secret project, the last thing that anyone would want was to have a bunch of lower-ranking officers attempting to investigate.

Yet this is exactly what they were being told to do. Not only that, they were given a priority and a security classi cation themselves. Ruppelt reported that the project was assigned a 2A classi cation, which while not the highest, was certainly a project that required special attention.

e mission of Project Sign, at least according to Ed Ruppelt, was to determine what the ying saucers were. ere were two schools of thought.

One suggested they were Soviet, and intel igence officers began searching the captured records of German project, looking for a clue. Other intel igence officers in Germany were doing the same thing.

e mission of Project Sign, at least according to Ed Ruppelt, was to determine what the flying saucers were.

ose opposed to this idea thought it would be foolish for the Soviets to be ying over U.S. territories. If one of the saucers crashed, then the Air Force would be able to reverse-engineer the cra. In other words, it would be handing over a huge technological leap to the enemy, and intel igence officers didn’t believe the Soviets would do that.

e second school of thought was that the UFOs were not manufactured

on Earth. At the time, they were looking at interplanetary cra and not something that was interstel ar.

During the summer, there had been a panic percolating through the Pentagon, but as time passed, they began to relax. Although the sightings continued, there had been no effort by the pilots of those cra to land and there were no hints that they were hostile. According to Ruppelt, by the end of 1947, the routine at ATIC began to return to

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normal. Twining's plan had been implemented, and Sign was set to begin operations.

Ruppelt, in his book written about the end of the summer, "As 1947 drew

to a close, the Air Force's Project Sign had outgrown its initial panic and had settled down to a routine operation. Every intel igence report dealing with the Germans' World War II aeronautical research had been studied to nd

out if the Russians could have developed any of the late German designs into ying saucers."

□at line of inquiry went nowhere. If the saucers were Soviet, and there

was no evidence that they were, and if they weren't American, and al aspects of the U.S. government from the new Department of Defense to the Department of State were denying they were secret U.S. cra□, then just what were they? If the ying saucers were real, meaning solid objects ying through the sky, and if they weren't based on any technology that was created on Earth, then just what were they? □e obvious answer was extraterrestrial.

□e Air Force continued to investigate ying saucers and assemble data about them, but there was no real drive behind the investigation. □ey were just going through the motions.

□en, on January 7, 1948, a National Guard pilot, Captain □omas Mantel , was kil ed chasing the ying saucer.

□e Mantel Incident

Although it seems that a logical answer for the case has been found, it is stil wrapped in controversy. Mantel was leading a ight of four F-51 aircra□ on a ferry mission to Kentucky.

It was at 1:20 P.M. when the tower crew at Godman Army Air Field at

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Fort Knox, Kentucky, spotted the large, bright, and apparently disc-shaped object high overhead. □ey alerted the operations officer and he in turn alerted the base commander, Colonel Guy F. Hix. None of them in the tower were immediately able to identify the object.

For nearly an hour and a half they watched the object that seemed to hang motionless in the sky. People in the towns near the base also watched the UFO, some claiming that it was moving slowly to the south. Some said that it hovered and then began its slow ight.

At 2:45 P.M. the situation changed when Mantel ’s ight requested permission to y through the area. □e UFO was stil visible and Mantel was asked if he would check on the object to try to identify it. Mantel replied that his was a ferry ight but he would attempt the intercept. He began a spiraling climb to □een thousand feet.

As he reached □een thousand feet, more than a thousand feet above the

altitude he was authorized to y at without oxygen on board, he radioed (according to disputed records) saying the object “is above me and appears to be moving half my speed.” Later, as he continued his climb, he would say that it was “metal ic and it is tremendous in size.”

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□omas Mantell.

□e records are confusing about the altitudes that various pilots reached.

Clearly Mantel and two of his wingmen climbed to □een thousand feet.

Most of the documentation suggests that al three aircra□ reached twenty-two thousand feet, where the two wingmen who had stayed with him, Lieutenant A. W. Clements and Lieutenant B.A. Hammond, turned back.

□e oxygen equipment of one of the ghters had failed, or had not been properly serviced on the ground before the ight, and military regulations required that oxygen be used above fourteen thousand feet. Hammond radioed that they were abandoning the intercept, but Mantel , who according to al available documentation had no oxygen equipment on his

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aircra□, or at the very least had no working equipment, continued his climb anyway. He did not acknowledge the last message from Hammond.

For thirty minutes, as the ight chased the huge object, each of the wingmen broke off the intercept. Now, at 3:10 P.M., Mantel was the only pilot le□ chasing the object and he was alone at twenty-three thousand feet.

According to the documentation available in the Project Blue Book les, he either told his wingmen that he was going to climb to twenty thousand feet

[again giving rise to the dispute over his altitude] and if he could get no closer or observe anything else, he would break off the intercept. Or, being unable to resolve the identity of the object, he said that he said he was going to climb to twenty- ve thousand feet for ten minutes.

□e last that anyone saw of him, he was stil climbing toward the UFO

but made no further radio cal s to either his wingmen or the control tower at Godman. By 3:15 everyone had lost both radio and visual contact with him.

Fearing the worst, a search was launched and just a□er 5:00 P.M., on a farm near Franklin, Kentucky, the remains of Mantel ’s F-51 were found scattered over about a half a mile. Mantel ’s body was inside the broken cockpit. His watch had stopped at 3:18 P.M. From the evidence it seems that Mantel was kil ed in the crash of his aircra□.

An investigation began immediately, as was required by military

regulations. It was a two-pronged attack. One was to determine what happened to Mantel and why he had crashed. In other words, it was a standard aircra□ accident investigation. □e second was to identify the object, or objects, that he had chased. □is was a UFO investigation.

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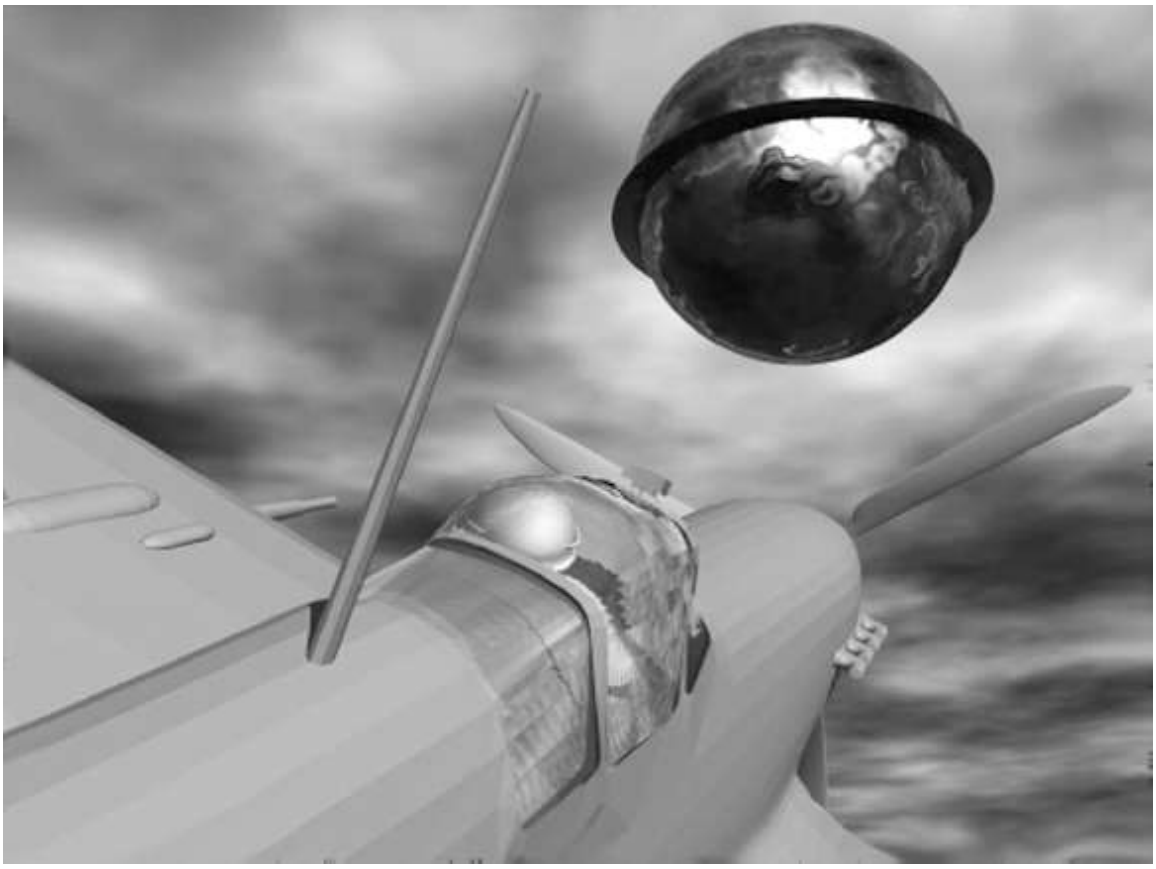

Re-creation of the UFO encounter experienced by □omas Mantell.

According to the documentation, the cause of the accident was Mantel ’s

climb to twenty- ve thousand feet without proper or working oxygen equipment. Subsequent research by both civilian and Air Force medical personnel have proven that pilots ying above fourteen thousand feet can begin to experience the effects of hypoxia, a lack of oxygen in the blood. □e higher the altitude, the faster the onset of the effects. Although mountain climbers and others living at high altitudes can be acclimated to the thin atmosphere, most people are not. In fact, in some, the effects can be seen at altitudes as low as seven or eight thousand feet.

Mantel had told his wingmen that he was going to climb to twenty- ve

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thousand feet and circle for ten minutes. If he couldn't get any closer to the UFO, he would break off the intercept. □e problem, however, was that Mantel 's "useful consciousness" at that altitude would have been about two minutes, and since he had been ying at twenty thousand feet or more for several minutes, he might not have remained conscious that long.

□is was the conclusion of the official accident investigation. In essence, it is pilot error. □e report was properly classi ed in 1947. □is was done in accident investigations so that those giving testimony would be honest in what they said and didn't have to worry about retribution.

□e UFO Aspect of the Mantell Investigation

□ose who saw the UFO were interviewed official y. Boiled down to their essence, these statements provided a glimpse about Mantel and what he had seen. Questioned on several points within days of the sighting, these men reported what they remembered Mantel saying. While the exact wording was lost, and contrary to some published reports, no tower recording was made, the meanings were quite clear. From Mantel , each of these witnesses reported:

Info taken from reports of radio conversation between Control at Godman and NG 869 essential y as fol ows:

Col Hix's account. NG 869: "Object traveling at 180 MPH—half my speed."

Lt Orner's account. NG 869: "High and traveling about ½ my speed at 12

o'clock position."

Later: "Closing in to take a good look."

No further word heard by Orner.

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T/Sgt Quinton A. Blackwel : NG 869: At 1445 [2:45 P.M.]. “Object traveling at 180 MPH directly ahead & above me now and moving at about ½ my speed.”

Later: “I’m trying to close in for a better look.”

At 15,000 □: “Object directly ahead of and above me now and moving about ½

my speed. It appears to be metal ic of tremendous size. I’m trying to close in for better look.”

No other word heard by Blackwel from NG 869.

Capt Gary W. Carter: NG 869: “Object going up and forward as fast as he was”—approx 360 MPH

“Going to 20,000 feet and if no closer wil abandon chase.”

No further contact heard by Capt Carter—apparently, last word ever received from NG 869.

□ese same witnesses, who watched the object for more than an hour,

sometimes through binoculars, offered a range of descriptions that, in the end, matched more or less one another. □eir words might have been different, and they searched for their own comparisons, but they al described the same basic object. □ey reported:

Col Guy F. Hix: “It was very white and looked like an umbrel a.”

“I thought it was a celestial body but I can’t account for the fact it didn’t move.”

“I just don’t know what it was.”

He said it was about 1/4 size of the ful moon and white in color. □rough the binoculars it appeared to have a red border at the bottom

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at times and a red border at the top at times. It remained stationary (seemingly) for 1-1 ½ hours.

Capt Carter: “Object appeared round and white (whiter than the clouds that passed in front of it) and cold be seen through cirus [sic] clouds.”

From interview with Duesler (accompanied by LTC E. G. Wood):

Wood said that the object appeared about 1/10 the size of a ful moon, if the thing were a great distance away, as compared to the diminishing size of the P51s ying toward it, it would seem that it was at least several hundred feet in diameter.

A□er dark, another or the same object appeared in approx 234 [degrees] from Godman at 6 [degrees] elevation. □is body moved to the west (259 [degrees]) and then down. □e shape was uid but general y round with no tail, the color changing from white, to blue, to red, to yel ow, and had a black spot in the center at al times.

NOTE: Later, an astronomer was contacted who attempted to account for this phenomena as either Venus or a comet. (?)

PFC Stanley Oliver: “Resembled an ice cream cone topped with red.”

Lt Orner: (□rough binoculars) “Could not determine of [sic] object radiated or re ected light. □ru binocs [sic] it appeared partial y as parachute with bright sun re ecting from top of the silk, however, there seemed to be some red light around the lower part of it.

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Captain Mantell tried unsuccessfully to chase down a UFO with his P-51.

What is interesting here is the descriptions al suggest something with a rounded top and then a long and tapering underside. □e weather bal oons, with which they al would have been familiar in 1948, al would have been about □een to twenty feet in diameter and would have been round or bal -

like. □e color of those bal oons would have been tan and they wouldn’t have been highly re ective unless carrying a rawin target device made of aluminum foil. Clearly the descriptions provided by the witnesses do not t with a weather bal oon and radar re ector, but do t with that of a Skyhook bal oon, which in 1948 was a classi ed project.

□e problem, however, was that the Air Force couldn’t admit that one of

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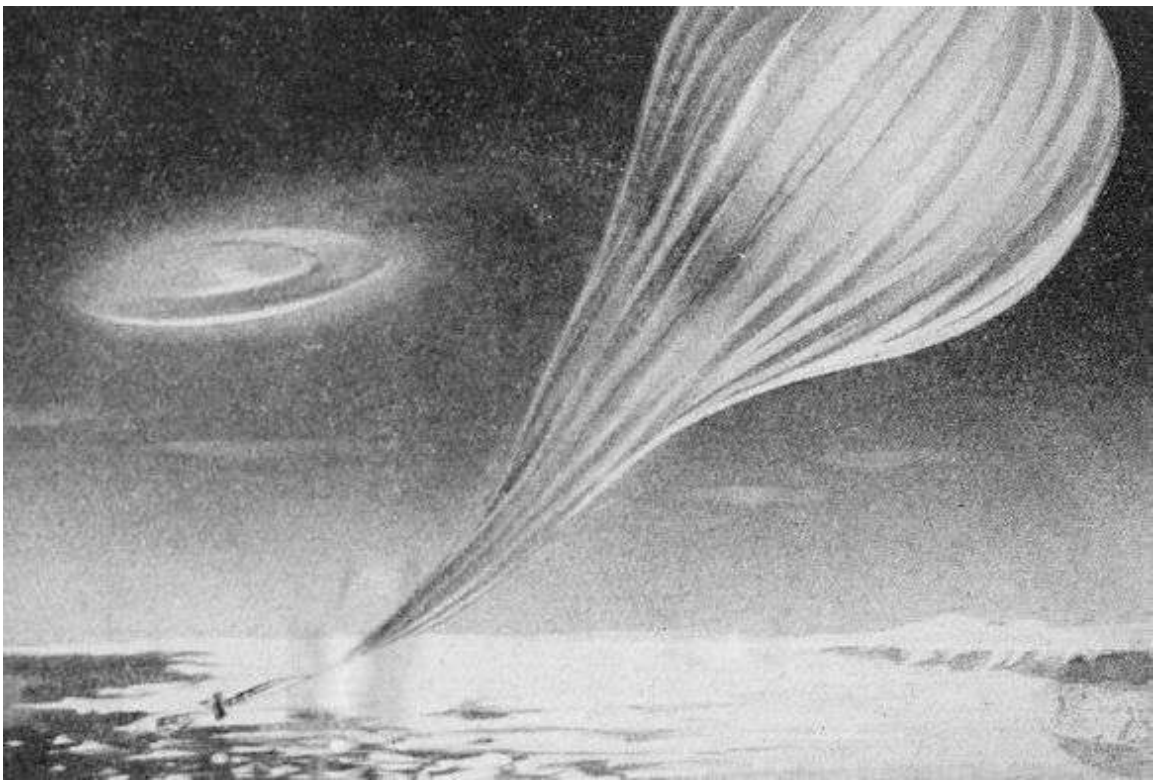
their pilots had been kil ed chasing what might have been an alien spacecra□. □ey needed to identify the object so that it could be labeled, and little care was given to that explanation. As long as they could label it, even if the label didn’t t, they would be happy with it.



A Skyhook balloon was mistaken to be a UFO, according to one theory

explaining Captain Mantell’s encounter.

One of the rst culprits mentioned in the official les was Venus.

Looking at only the direction of the object in the sky, and given the time of day, Air Force investigators noticed that Venus would have been occupying that part of the sky. According to the astronomical charts available, at the time of the initial UFO sighting, Venus could be seen in the daylight sky in the approximate location of the UFO. A few of the investigators thought that Venus, if seen by Mantel , might explain the sighting.

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Astronomers consulted acknowledged that Venus would have been

visible, but doubted that a random search of the sky would have found it.

Although bright enough to be seen in the daylight, it would have blended easily into the surrounding sky. If there was even the lightest of haze, Venus probably wouldn't have been visible to those on the ground. Or, in other words, Venus was not an acceptable explanation, and the cause of the sighting would have to be found elsewhere.

In the official les, one of the reports goes into depth about Venus.

"However, under exceptional y good atmospheric conditions and the eye shielded from the direct rays of the sun, Venus might be seen as an exceeding tiny bright point of light. It can be shown that it was de nitely brighter than the surrounding sky, for on the date in question, Venus has a semi-diameter of six seconds of arc…. While it is thus physical y possible to see Venus at such times, usual y its pinpoint character and large expanse of sky makes its casual detection very unlikely." □ey were, in effect, saying that Venus was visible but they didn't think it was the answer.

□e Air Force investigator was not nished with the Venus answer, however. He wrote, "□e chances, of course, of looking at just the right spot are very few. Once done, however, it is usual y fairly easy to relocate the object and cal the attention of others to it. However, atmospheric conditions must be exceptional y good."

Relevant to this theory is, of course, the weather data. □e weather at Godman AAF, available in the Project Blue Book les, showed that they started the day overcast, but that gradual y the cloud layer broke up so that blue sky could be seen. □e visibility at Godman varied between eight and twelve miles. □is suggests that there were not the optimum sky conditions necessary for someone to see Venus in the daytime.

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When the astronomers said that Venus was not a likely answer, they began to look elsewhere. □e official report said, “It had been unofficial y reported that the object was a Navy cosmic ray bal oon. If this can be established, it is to be the preferred explanation.” □is is suggestive of an investigation that is not interested in the truth but in labeling the case.

But this section of the Project Blue Book report was anything but consistent. Having said that it was Venus, that it wasn’t Venus, and that it was a bal oon, the investigator now explained why it wasn’t a bal oon. “If one accepts the assumption that reports from various locations in the state refer to the same object, any such device must have been a good many miles up

… 25 to 50 … in order to have been seen clearly, almost simultaneously, from places 175 miles apart.”

Now, having run through al sorts of explanations, the investigator wrote, “It is entirely possible, of course, that the rst sightings were of some sort of bal oon or aircra□ and that when the reports came to Godman Field, a careful scrutiny of the sky revealed Venus, and it could be that Lieutenant

[sic] Mantel did actual y give chase to Venus.”

Final y, the investigator wrote, again, that it was Venus, but for that explanation to work properly, he needed a bal oon and one other object as wel . Given these three items, though there is no evidence that al three existed, he believed he could explain the case. He wrote, “Such a hypothesis

[that is, Mantel chasing Venus] does stil necessitate the inclusion of at least two other objects.”

Al of this suggests something about the investigations as they were being carried out in that era by the military and the personnel at Project Sign. It was a search for labels, but not necessarily a search for solutions.

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□ey were wil ing to accept nearly anything as an answer as long as they could remove a mysterious case from the les. And Mantel ’s case, because of the sensational aspects as wel as the public interest, was certainly one of those to be solved at al costs.

In 1952, a major magazine wanted to print an article about how spectacular UFO sightings had been explained through proper research and investigation. Because the spin of the article was that ying saucers did not exist, the Pentagon cooperated with the writer and the magazine. High-ranking Air Force officers assured the magazine editors that Mantel had chased Venus. In a move that was sure to anger the reporter and the magazine editor, a week a□er the magazine was published the Air Force released a new answer. Mantel had chased a bal oon.

Air Force Responsibility

□e solution to this case would have come much sooner had the Air Force not been interested in disproving UFOs but had been interested in nding answers. Clearly Venus has nothing to do with this sighting. □e fact that it was in the sky near the right location at the time is irrelevant and has confused people for much too long. □e weather data, available to the Air Force investigators, provided sufficient reason to reject Venus as the culprit.

Stil , the Air Force was insistent, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, that Venus was responsible, if not for al the sightings, at least in part for the Mantel side of the case. Venus, as a culprit, has been eliminated for al but the Air Force.

□ere is no need to create a number of bal oons or other unidenti ed

and unreported aircra□ in the area to nd a solution. Al the talk of another bal oon or object is also irrelevant.

Given the descriptions provided, the fact that Skyhook bal oons were being launched in the right time frame, and given the size and shape of those bal oons, it seems reasonable to believe that Mantel chased

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a Skyhook. Neither he, nor anyone else at Godman Army Air Field, would have been familiar with the Skyhooks. □ey were virtual y unknown in 1948.

□ey certainly would have been huge, uid, and would have looked metal ic because they were made of polyethylene.

Given the descriptions provided, the fact that Skyhook balloons were

being launched in the right time frame, and given the size and shape of

those balloons, it seems reasonable to believe that Mantell chased a Skyhook.

Mantel ’s suggestion, that the object was moving at half his speed, or later suggestions that it was moving away from him as fast as he was ying toward it, are the result of optical il usion. He was looking up, at a silver, more or less circular object, against a bright background. He had no reliable estimate of the size or the distance. Without those facts, he was fooled into believing that the object was maneuvering away from him. □ere are no

indications in the witness testimony to suggest the object was moving more than ten or □een miles an hour. It was moving with the winds alo□ as the data indicate.

When the le is careful y studied, when the descriptions are considered, there is but a single conclusion. □is was a Skyhook bal oon compounded by an enthusiasm for the mission and a tragic mistake.

And it is clear from this information that the Air Force was going to solve the case no matter what it took. □ey changed their answer several times, coming back to Venus and bal oons. □ey nal y settled on a Skyhook bal oon, but only a□er the aws in other solutions were pointed out.

□e Estimate of the Situation

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In September 1948, the Air Force, a□er a year of official and unofficial investigations, produced an “Estimate of the Situation” that has become part of UFO folklore. Original y classi ed as top secret and then ordered destroyed because it didn’t match the opinion of the Air Force Chief of Staff, Ed Ruppelt reported that he had seen the document. According to Ruppelt, the original estimate suggested that the ying saucers were of extraterrestrial origin.

Very few people ever admitted to seeing the document, so the source of

the information is Ruppelt. He mentioned it in his book, but then, according to what Mike Swords discovered, much of the material had been edited out.

An examination of that material provides an interesting insight into Project Sign and the investigation of UFOs, as it transpired in the late 1940s.

CUFOS and FUFOR obtained Ruppelt’s papers so that they had the opportunity to explore what Ruppelt knew about the Estimate. Using that as source material, Swords wrote an article for the International UFO Reporter.

To show what had been le□ out of Ruppelt’s books, he used italics to show the deleted material. □e fol owing is based on Swords’ review of Ruppelt’s papers.

In intel igence, if you have something to say about some vital problem you write a report that is known as an “Estimate of the Situation.” A few days a□er the DC-3 was buzzed, the people at ATCI decided that the time had arrived to make an “Estimate of the Situation.” □e situation was UFOs; and the estimate was they were interplanetary!

It was a rather thick document with a black cover and it was printed on legal-sized paper. Stamped across the front were the words TOP SECRET.

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It contained the Air Force's analysis of many of the incidents I have told you about plus many similar ones. Al of them had come from scientists, pilots, and other equal y credible observers, and each one was an unknown.

It concluded that UFOs were interplanetary. As documented proof, many unexplained sightings were quoted. □e original UFO sighting was by Kenneth Arnold; the series of sightings from the secret Air Force Test Center, Muroc

[later, Edwards Air Force Base]; the F-51 pilot's observations of a formation of spheres near Lake Mead; the report of an F-80 pilot who saw two round

objects diving toward the ground near the Grand Canyon; and a report by the pilot of an Idaho National Guard T-6 trainer who saw a violently maneuvering black object.

Edwards Air Force Base (originally the secret Air Force Test Center, Muroc) in southern California is where a number of UFO sightings

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have been reported by military personnel.

As further documentation, the report quoted an interview with an Air Force major from Rapid City AFB (now El sworth AFB), who saw twelve UFOs ying in a tight diamond formation. When he rst saw them there were high but soon they went into a fantastical y high-speed dive, leveled out, made a perfect formation turn and climbed at a 30 or 40 degree angle, accelerating al the time. □e UFOs were oval-shaped and bril iantly yel owish-white.

Also included was one of the reports from the AEC's Los Alamos Laboratory.

□e incident occurred at 9:40 A.M. on September 23, 1948. A group of people were waiting for an airplane at the landing strip in Los Alamos when one of them noticed something glint in the sun. It was a at, circular object, high in the northern sky. □e appearance and relative size was the same as a dime held edgewise and slightly tipped, about □y feet away.

□e document pointed out that the reports hadn't actual y started with the Arnold incident. Belated reports from a weather observer in Richmond,

Virginia, who observed a "silver disc" through his theodolite telescope; F-47

pilot and three pilots in his formation who saw a "silvery ying wing"; and the English "ghost airplanes" that had been picked up on radar early in 1947

proved the point. Although reports on them were not received until a□er the Arnold sighting, these incidents had al taken place earlier.

When the estimate was completed, typed, and approved, it started up through channels to higher command echelons. It drew considerable comment but no one stopped it on its way up.

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Vandenberg at the Pentagon eventual y received the “Estimate” but apparently was less than impressed. At that point, according to Ruppelt, “it was batted back down. □e general wouldn’t buy interplanetary vehicles. □e report lacked proof.”

Swords reported that a group of military officers and civilian technical intel igence engineers was then cal ed to the Pentagon to defend the

“Estimate.” □ey al seemed to believe that the UFOs were interplanetary but their defense of it failed. Not long a□er that happened, everyone named was reassigned. Swords noted, “So great was the carnage that only the lowest grades in the project, civilian George Towles and Lieutenant H. W. Smith, were le□ to write the 1949 Project Grudge document about the same cases.”

Clearly, a□er Vandenberg “batted” the report back down, and a□er the

staff was signi cantly reduced, the re went out in the investigation. Project Sign limped along. It was clear to everyone in the military establishment that Vandenberg was not a proponent of the interplanetary theory. □ose who

thought otherwise risked the wrath of the number-one man in the Air Force and the quickest way to nd their career in ruins was to support the idea.

□ey’d just had a practical demonstration of that and if an officer couldn’t gure that out, then he was on his way out.

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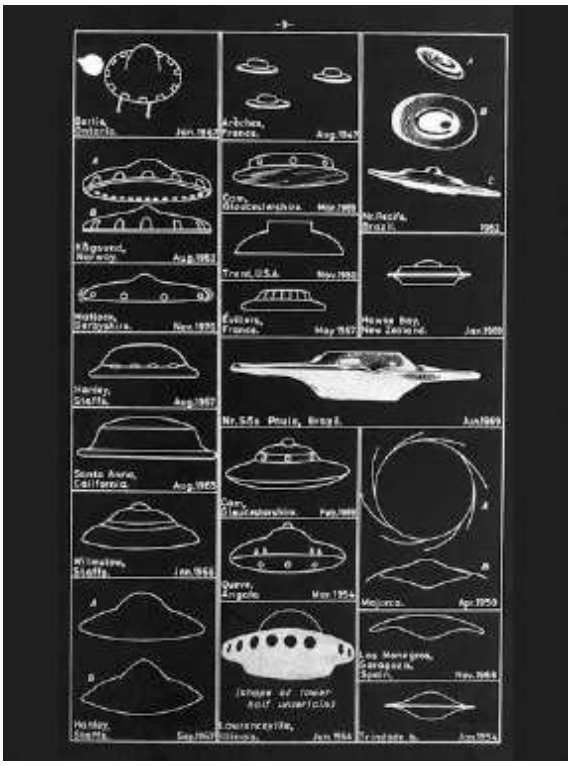

□e End of Project Sign

A nal report cal ed "□e Findings of Project Sign" was written. □is described the motivation for starting the project, who worked on it, and the results of their investigations. In the summary it noted that the report was based on "243 domestic and thirty (30) foreign incidents. Data from these incidents is being summarized, reproduced, and distributed to agencies and individuals cooperating in the analysis and evaluation…. □e data contained in reports received are studied in relation to many factors, such as guided missile research activity, weather and other atmospheric sounding bal oon launchings, commercial and military ights, ights of migratory birds, and other considerations, to determine possible explanations for sightings."

□ey did note, however, "□e objects sighted have been grouped into four classi cations according to con guration:

1. Flying discs, i.e., very low aspect ratio aircra□.

2. Torpedo or cigar-shaped bodies with no wings or ns visible in ight.

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3. Spherical or bal oon-shaped objects.

4. Bal s of light.

□e British have also categorized types of UFOs seen over their nation, as seen in this diagram available at the National Archives UK.

But, they also wrote, "□e possibility that some of the incidents may represent technical developments far in advance of knowledge available to engineers and scientists of this country has been considered. No facts are available to personnel at this Command that wil permit an objective assessment of this possibility. Al information so far presented on the possible existence of space ships from another planet or aircra□ propel ed by an advanced type of atomic power plant have been largely conjecture."

Or, in other words, with the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, the numberone man in an Air Force uniform tel ing his subordinates that he doesn't accept an extraterrestrial answer, no one at Project Sign is going to risk his career by suggesting otherwise. □ey provided a nod in that direction, but then said it wasn't the correct solution and that it was only guesswork anyway.

□e recommendations were a little surprising then. □ey suggested,

"Future activity on this project should be carried on at the minimum level necessary to record, summarize, and evaluate the data received on future reports and to complete the specialized investigations now in progress."

□ey then wrote, "When and if a sufficient number of incidents are solved to indicate that these sightings do not represent a threat to the security of the nation, the assignment of special project status to the activity should be terminated."

Sign, it seems, was going to be turned into an organization for training.

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□e personnel assigned to it would be interviewing witnesses, gathering data, and would learn how to interrogate people so that the best evidence could be found. Of course, they didn't believe there were alien spaceships, so that training would be applied in other arenas, such as the search for enemy airmen who might have bailed out over friendly territory.

On December 16, 1949, Project Sign ended. □e Air Force announced

that Project Saucer, the cover name given to the investigation, had been closed. □ey had found nothing to suggest that the ying saucers posed a

threat to national security and they found no evidence that they were either

an advance in Earth-based technology or that they were alien in nature. □e general public was le□ with the impression that the Air Force was no longer investigating ying saucers.

□is was not true.

Project Grudge

According to the documentation that is now available to researchers, the name, Project Sign, was original y classi ed. □e Air Force had told the public that the name of their UFO investigation was Project Saucer, but that was part of their cover story. Later, according to those Air Force sources, the name, Sign, was compromised. □at meant that those not authorized to know it had learned of it. □e solution, or course, was to change the name to something else and continue to investigate.

□at is what the Air Force did.

But the investigation into the ying saucers never actual y ended.

Even with nearly everyone in the Air Force believing that UFO

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investigations should be reduced, if not ended, that didn't happen. In the Sign report of February 1949, there is a page that notes the title of the project was changed to Grudge, and the authority for it was, "Hq, USAF, Deputy Chief of Staff, Materiel, Washington 25, D.C., dated 30 Dec. 1947."

□e project retained its 2A priority and the purpose was "to col ect, col ate, evaluate and interpret data obtained relative to the sighting of unidenti ed objects in the atmosphere which may have importance on the

national security, and to control and effect distribution of al objective information as requested to interested governmental agencies and

contractors."

Ed Ruppelt, who had been given the task of leading the Air Force investigation, wrote, "Everything was being evaluated on the belief that UFOs couldn't exist. No matter what you hear, don't believe it."

In August 1949, there was another study conducted which concluded that the project be reduced in scope. □e authors of that report wrote "that Psychological Warfare Division and other governmental agencies interested in psychological warfare be informed of the results of the study."

Just months later, on December 27, 1949, it was announced that Project

Grudge was to be closed. □e nal report, released to the press, was

hundreds of pages long and was l ed with the type of jargon that the military seemed to favor.

□e Grudge report was made up of 237 of the best UFO sightings. J.

Al en Hynek and his staff were able to explain some of them as astronomical phenomena. □e Air Force Air Weather Service and the Cambridge

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Research Laboratory were also able to reduce the number of unexplained sightings. Weather bal oons and the huge, classi ed Skyhook research bal oons accounted for some sightings, including that made by omas Mantel .

But some of the explanations offered seemed to have been offered just to explain the sightings. e Rhodes photographs which had seemed to defy

explanation were identi ed as bits of paper blown alo by the wind and photographed on a cloudy day against a dark gray background.

e press seemed to be underwhelmed by the report. Ruppelt said that

the press grabbed the appendix labeled “Summary of the Evaluation of Remaining Reports” and found it confusing. Few would, of course, wade through the entire document to see what might be hidden in it, if anything.

Ruppelt wrote that the reporters he knew found the results impossible to believe. He said that he talked to one longtime Washington reporter. Ruppelt wrote, “He said the report had been quite impressive, but only in its ambiguousness, il ogical reasoning, and very apparent effort to write off al UFO reports at any cost. He, personal y, thought it was a poor attempt to put out a ‘fake’ report, ful of misleading information, to cover-up the real story.

Others, he told me, just plainly and simply didn’t know what to think—they were confused.”

Grudge, as did Sign, came with a number of conclusions that didn’t necessarily re ect the information. ey were:

1. Evaluation of reports of unidenti ed ying objects constitute no direct threat to the national security of the United States.

2. Reports of unidenti ed ying objects are the result of:

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a. A mild form of mass hysteria or “war nerves.”

b. Individuals who fabricate such reports to perpetuate a hoax or seek publicity.

c. Psychpathological persons.

d. Misidenti cations of various conventional objects.

□is, of course, confused Ruppelt simply because he had been ordered

by those at a much higher level to re-evaluate the UFO program, seek better reporting systems, and continue to search. In the civilian world, it was suggested that Grudge was the end of the line in the world of the UFO. Of course, it was not.

It has been said by skeptics, scientists, governmental leaders, and military officers that there is no evidence that UFOs are anything other than il usions, misidenti cations, hal ucinations, and hoaxes. □ey have said, repeatedly, that there is no evidence that UFOs—meaning alien spacecra□—

have visited the Earth. □ey have found nothing in al the cases investigated and al the time spent discussing UFOs that warrant further study. □e questions have been answered and the debate, for them, is over.

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And if they truly believed al this, they would be wrong.

On November 2, 1957, a series of sightings began around the tiny Texas

panhandle town of Level and that, had they been properly investigated at the time, would have yielded the evidence those skeptics claim doesn't exist. It was a series of sightings made by multiple witnesses in multiple locations that involved interaction with the environment and possible landing traces.

Had UFO researchers in 1957 investigated the sightings then and had the

Air Force been interested in learning the truth rather than proving UFOs were not spacecra□, the direction of UFO research might have been different. Had everyone not been arguing with everyone else, something concrete might have been learned. Today al we can do is look at the evidence that is now more than a half-century old and try to understand what happened then and why it happened as it did.

Sightings before Level and

Before the object invaded the Level and area and exhibited a variety of what are now known as electromagnetic effects, something was seen in the surrounding area. About nineteen hours before the rst of the sightings in Level and, a driver near Canadien, Texas, northeast of Amaril o and near the Oklahoma border, saw a "submarine-shaped" object that was about □y feet long and red and white. As it landed nearby, his headlights failed. He saw a smal humanoid creature near the object, which is the only case from this area and time in which an occupant was observed.

At about eight that evening, the owner of KCLV in Clovis, New Mexico,

Odis Echols, reported he had seen a glowing object rapidly ying to the southeast. Clovis is not far from the Texas border and not far from Level and.

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Near Midland, Texas, which is something over a hundred miles from Level and, the Ground Observers Corps logged a number of reports of a large bluish object. It was ying west at a low altitude.

Just before the reports began in Level and, at about 11:20 P.M., Calvin Harris and Sandy McKean, tower operators at the Amaril o, Texas, airport, saw a bluish object moving across the sky. McKean said that he had never seen anything so spectacular.

Pedro Saucedo and Joe Salaz

Pedro Saucedo (or Saucido, depending on the source) later said that he

was driving toward Level and along Route 114 (which then was designated

as Route 116). Don Burleson said that the actual location is where Route 114

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intersects with Five Mile Road, some 5.3 miles west of Level and) when a large, glowing object crossed the highway in front of him and landed not al that far away. He said that as it touched down, the lights on his truck dimmed and the engine died. When it landed, Saucedo dived out the door

and rol ed out of the way, frightened by the strange object.

Pedro Saucedo was driving along Route 114, shown here, when a large, glowing object crossed in front of him.

Site where Pedro Saucedo saw the UFO.

Charles Maney and Richard Hal , in their □e Chal enge of Unidentified

Flying Objects published by NICAP in 1961, wrote that Saucedo, a Korean

War veteran, said, “When it got near the light of my truck went out and the motor died. I jumped out of the truck and hit the dirt because I

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was afraid…. □e thing passed directly over my truck with a loud sound and a

rush of wind. It sounded like thunder and my truck rocked from the blast.”

His passenger, Joe (or Jose) Salaz (or Palav, Palaz, Salav or Salvaz, depending on the source), sat petri ed with his eyes glued to the bluegreen object as the glow faded into a red so bright that he couldn’t look directly at it. □e object rested on the ground for three or four minutes while Salaz sat stil , as if motion would attract attention. Although as frightened as Saucedo he remained where he was and he got a very good look at the UFO.

According to Don Keyhoe in Flying Saucers Top Secret, “As Salav [sic]

watched from the cab, the strange machine settled close to the road.

Whether it landed or was hovering just off the ground, Salav could not say—

the blue-green light was too bright. For two or three minutes the UFO

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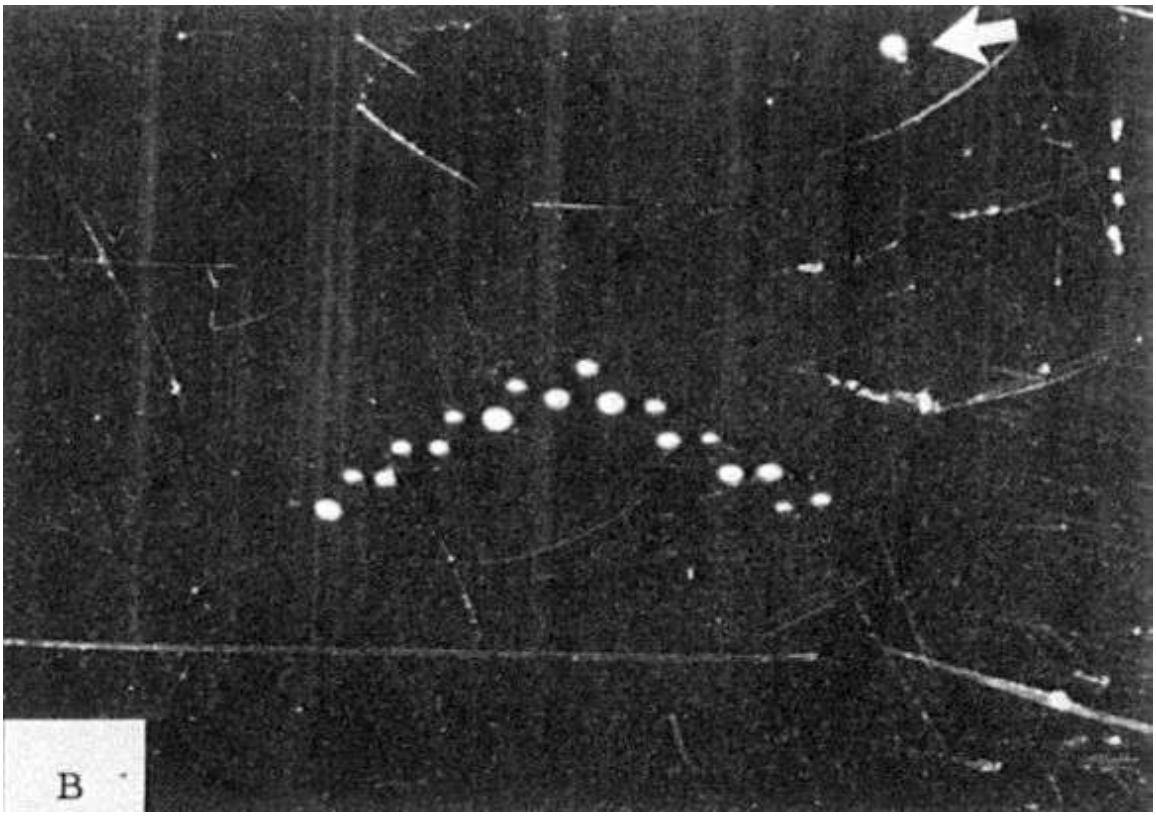

remained there. □en it quickly li□ed, its glow changing to a red as it climbed."

□is formation of UFOs was spotted by several witnesses over Lubbock, Texas, and captured in this photo by Carl Hart.

During the time the torpedo-shaped object sat on the ground, both men

believed they could hear noise coming from it. □en, as suddenly as it appeared, but now glowing bright red, the UFO shot up into the sky, vanishing in seconds.

As the UFO disappeared and Saucedo crawled from under his truck, both the lights and engine began working again. Afraid that he would run into the object if he continued to Level and, he drove to another town to cal the Level and police about 10:50 P.M. A deputy sheriff identi ed by some as A. J. Fowler (and also identi ed as a police officer rather than a deputy or as a police dispatcher, again

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depending on the source) listened to his report, but laughed it off as just another ying saucer story, ignoring the obvious distress of the witness. Or, as Fowler believed at rst, the cal er was drunk and seeing things and that, too, meant he paid no attention to the witness.

But as happens so o□en with UFO sightings, there are discrepancies in this original tale, many of which mean little. Newspapers report that Saucedo actual y talked to the sheriff when he got to Level and. Clem told reporters that Saucedo “was pretty shook up when he got into town.”

Saucedo was also reported to have said that the UFO had streaked right

overhead. “It sounded like thunder, and my truck rocked from the blast. I felt a lot of heat.”

Or, as reported by the Chicago Daily Tribune on November 4, 1957, Siado (in stil a different spel ing of Saucedo) said that he “heard a roar like a clap of thunder. □en his car lights went out and the motor stopped.”

A few days a□er the sightings, the lone Air Force investigator on the case, Staff Sergeant Norman P. Barth of the 1006th Air Intel igence Service Squadron, made a short trip from Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock into Level and to interview Saucedo, among the few other witnesses that the Air Force had identi ed. Barth gave Saucedo a low reliability as a witness. Barth wrote in his report led with Project Blue Book, “SOURCE [Saucedo]

appeared to be [deleted by Air Force officers]. He stated his occupation was a barber; however, Sheriff [Weir] Clem … stated that SOURCE was a part-time farm laborer, dishwasher, barber, etc. SOURCE had no concept of direction and was con icting in his answers.”

Saucedo provided a written statement to Barth that said, “To whom it

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may concern, on the date of November 2, 1957, I was traveling north and

west on route 116, driving my truck. At about four miles out of Level and, I saw a blue ame, to my right, front, then I thought it was lightning. But when this object had reach [sic] to my position, it was different, because it put my truck motor out and lights. □en I stop, got out, and took a look, but it was so rapid and quite [sic] some heat, that I had to hit the ground, it also had three colors, yel ow, white and it look like a torpedo, about 200 feet long, moving about 600 to 800 miles an hour."

□e Air Force, in an attempt to explain this case as quickly as possible, reported, "Investigation proved that a rotor had been changed on the farmers [sic] truck the previous day PD [period]. One piece of the old rotor had not been removed and had wedged in between the points causing the

electrical system to be now non operative PD [period]. □is statement was obtained from the mechanic who had repaired the truck PD [period]."

In other words, the Air Force was suggesting that the dimming of the

headlights and the stopping of the motor were the result of a faulty repair on the truck's rotor made sometime earlier. But this explanation fails to provide a reason the headlights would dim and the engine stop, and then seemingly spark back to life on their own when the UFO disappeared. □is was an explanation offered repeatedly for Saucedo's sighting, but it explained nothing at al about it.

On the ip side of that coin, others, such as Maney and Hal , described

Saucedo as a combat veteran of the Korean War. Donald Menzel and Lyle

Boyd, in their □e World of Flying Saucers also mention that Saucedo was a veteran of the Korean War. Most seem inclined to give the bene t of the doubt to a veteran, especial y when most of the negative

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comments come from the Air Force investigator and might be a prejudice against anyone who claims to have seen a ying saucer. ere have also been negative comments made because Saucedo's name is spel ed almost like saucer and

some saw some sort of conspiracy there, but a witness' name is a witness'

name and there is nothing that can be done about that.

ere is another point of controversy and that is whether Saucedo cal ed

the sheriff's office or drove there in person. Menzel, in his book, wrote,

"Crawling out and seeing the object disappear in the direction of Level and he [Saucedo] restarted the engine and drove back to Level and to report the incident to the sheriff."

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Weir Clem was sheriff in Levelland, Texas, when he had to field reports of UFOs in his jurisdiction.

□is adds to the confusion of the night by suggesting that Saucedo restarted his truck, but this is the only place that is implied. □en adding that Saucedo drove to the sheriff's office seems to contradict other reports. It seems clear, however, that Saucedo used the telephone and did not drive to Level and at that time.

More Sightings

About the same time that Saucedo and Salaz were driving to another town, Air Force Technical Sergeant Harold D. Wright and his wife were driving along Texas Farm Road 1073 near Shal owater. According to the statement

he gave the Air Force, "… my wife, 2 children and myself departed my father's home … in the vicinity of Anton, Texas, my wife and I noted occasional lightning and at the same time static on our radio…. I turned south (at Shal owater, Texas)…. In just a few minutes later this bolt of lightning occurred to our southwest. At the time, my radio and lights went out for approximately one to three seconds, and then came back on. My wife and I remarked [that] was certainly a strong bolt of lightning to put out our lights and the radio."

Newel Wright (no relation to Harold Wright), a nineteen-year-old col ege student at Texas Tech in Lubbock, was nearing Level and when he

glanced at his dashboard ammeter. Wright (whose name was redacted from

the Air Force report) told the Air Force investigator, Barth, "I was driving home from Lubbock on state highway 116 [which is, of course, the same highway that Saucedo was on and the one that was later redesignated] at approximately 12:00 P.M. when the ammeter on my car jumped to complete

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discharge, then it returned to normal and my motor started cutting out like it was out of gas. A□er it had quit running, my lights went out. I got out of my car and tried in vain to nd the trouble."

□e site where Jim Wheeler encountered a UFO in Levelland, Texas.

Wright continued, "It was at this time that I saw this object, I got back into my car and tried to start it, but to no avail. A□er that I did nothing but stare at this object until it disappeared about 5 minutes later. I then resumed trying to start my car and succeeded with no more trouble than under normal circumstances."

Later, in his interview with Barth, Wright would provide some

additional details. He said that the object was oval-shaped and that he thought it was about the size of a basebal held at arm's length. He estimated that the object was about seventy- ve to a hundred feet long. One of the important facts was that he had the opportunity to get a very good look at the object, which wasn't al that far away and stayed on the ground for several minutes by his estimation. It wasn't a streak of light in the distance.

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□e only problem with this sighting is that Wright didn't make his report until the next day. By that time, the news media was alerted and reports of the sightings in and around Level and had been published. It could be said that Wright got his idea by what he had read in the newspaper, though there is no evidence that the media in uenced him at al and no evidence that he

invented the sighting for the publicity. He just reported his experience, which might have some relevance for investigators.

Of course, it could also be pointed out that Wright, learning of other reports, added his to the mix. He might not have thought about cal ing the sheriff until a□er he learned others had made their reports to Level and Sheriff Weir Clem. Or, it might be suggested that he had thought no one would believe him until he learned that others had seen the same thing.

Barth's evaluation of Wright said, "SOURCE seemed to the investigator

to be very sincere about his sighting. He was appal ed at the amount of publicity given him and was anxious to have the sighting resolved. He was unhesitating in his replies; however, during the course of further questioning, he admitted uncertainty in some of his answers. SOURCE can

be considered usual y reliable."

About the same time, Jim Wheeler was driving along Route 116 about

four miles from Level and when he spotted an egg-shaped object sitting on the road. He told NICAP investigator James A. Lee that the object cast "a glare over the area."

As he approached, his lights dimmed and his motor stopped. As he started to get out of the car, the UFO rose into the sky. As it disappeared, the car lights came back on and he could restart his car. He cal ed the police in Level and as soon as he could.

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At just a□er midnight on November 3, Ronald Martin saw the red-glowing, egg-shaped object sitting on the road about four miles east of Level and. As he approached to within about a quarter mile, his car engine died and his lights went out. While the UFO sat on the ground, Martin said the color was bluish-green. When he started to get out of his car, the UFO

li□ed off swi□ly and silently. As it disappeared, Martin's car engine started again and the lights came on.

But there is a discrepancy with this report. According to NICAP records, Martin didn't say anything about the electromagnetic effects cutting off his engine. According to that report, he saw the object rst in the air, but that it landed about three hundred or four hundred feet in front of him. He didn't report this to the Level and Police until the next a□ernoon.

□is means there is con icting information about the Martin sighting. It

would seem that the Air Force would want to exploit this, especial y if Martin said that his engine had not been stopped and his lights not dimmed, but they seemed to have missed it.

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Almost as the police in Level and hung up the telephone from talking

with Wheeler, Jose Alvarez (or Alverez, depending on the source) near Whitharral cal ed to report that he had seen the egg-shaped object that kil ed his car's engine. And, a few minutes later, Frank Wil iams walked into the station to report the same sort of thing.

□e site where Frank Williams had his sighting.

□e reaction of law enforcement in Level and was that someone was playing some sort of an elaborate joke. No one there believed that a glowing red egg, or a bluish-green oval, was terrorizing the populace. Besides, the weather was poor, with mist and drizzle, and there had been thunderstorms in the vicinity, off and on al evening, at least according to what Barth would later report. □e Air Force would claim that these facts were important.

As the police officers discussed it and tried to laugh it off, Jesse (also identi ed as James) Long cal ed to report that he was driving on a country road northwest of Level and when he came upon a landed, bright red cra□.

His truck engine died and his lights went out. Unlike the others, Long got

out of his truck and started to walk toward the object. Before he could get too close, the UFO took off in a sudden burst of speed. A□er it was gone, Long reported that his truck engine started easily.

By this point Level and Sheriff Weir Clem decided that something truly

strange was happening around his town. But he didn't like the idea of chasing lights in the night sky, especial y with the weather as bad as it supposedly was. □understorms were stil in the area, again according to what has been reported since the sightings, and though they had caused some problems earlier, it was no longer raining in town. □ere was no excuse for not trying to nd the object. Or rather no

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reason for Clem to remain in the office when he could be out searching for the object.

Weather Effects

Or maybe the weather wasn't quite as bad as has been reported by the Air Force in the years since. □ere seems to be a con ict about that as wel . □e Air Force report said, "□e night was dark with a 400 foot ceiling, a complete overcast, and light drizzle. Heavy thunderstorms had just passed through the area."

□e Level and Sun, however, reported, "Weathermen said they could not

explain away the sightings. □ere were no thunderstorms in the area."

James McDonald, a scientist with a deep interest in UFOs, in a prepared

statement in Symposium on Unidenti ed Flying Objects, wrote that he "dug out the weather maps and rainfal data. A large high pressure area was moving southward over the Texas Panhandle, completely antithetical to convective activity and lightning of any sort … a check of half a dozen stations in the vicinity revealed that there was not even any rain fal ing during this period no had more than a smal amount fal en in the hours earlier that day when a cold front went through."

Skeptics point out that the best interpretation of the weather is that it was a dark and stormy night, there had been rain, and there was a mist in the air. □ese conditions, they believe, might have been conducive to reports of engines stal ing and lights failing. What they don't explain is why these manifestations were limited to the area around Level and, and limited to the night of November 2 and the morning of November 3 in that area, and why

they don't manifest themselves under similar weather conditions.

□e Air Force Search for an Explanation

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About an hour a□er Martin's sighting, Sheriff Clem decided he would have to investigate. He le□ the office with Deputy Sheriff Patrick McCul ogh and drove the back roads and the highways in the Level and area. About 1:30

A.M. they saw the glowing UFO in the distance. □ey couldn't seem to get very close to it, or at least that was what they said publicly in 1957 a□er having talked to the Air Force investigator.

According to Barth, he found Clem to be "fairly reliable." He wrote,

"SOURCE impressed the investigator as being of average intel igence…. He was rather pleased with the sudden importance of the county."

In the interview Clem told Barth that he was out looking for the object

that had been reported and while traveling south on Oklahoma Flat Road, at about twenty miles an hour, he saw the streak of light. It had a reddish glow and moved from south to west. Clem thought that it was about 800 feet long and about four hundred yards away.

Burleson said that the description and the location he received

independently from Reno matched that given by the sheriff's daughter.

Other researchers reported that Clem had said privately he was

considerably closer. He described the object as an oval "like a bril iant sunset." He said that it passed over the road about three hundred yards in front of his car.

Donald Burleson, a man living in Roswel , which is not al that far from Level and, only about three hours over the modern roads, found the daughter of Sheriff Clem when he was doing some research into these sightings nearly □y years later. Burleson reported in the Roswel Daily Record in 2002, "Aided by the Chamber of Commerce, we

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[meaning Burleson and his wife, Mol ie] were able to nd one of the late sheriff's daughters and I interviewed her twice."

According to Burleson, "She [Ginger (Clem) Sims] described her father

having tried to drive close to an airborne object, and having his engine and

lights die."

□at, of course, put him much closer to the object than had been reported before or to what the Air Force would claim that he had seen. If he was close enough to the object that it would stal his engine, he was close enough to get a good look at it.

Burleson also reported that "she said that she remembers his being cal ed out to a ranch northeast of town to see a ring-shaped spot burned into the ground. □e ranch owners had cal ed the sheriff about the burned area."

Burleson also reported that he interviewed a witness named Carolyn Reno who said that she had been a child living in the area in 1957, and that her father had taken her out to see a burned spot in the prairie grass that was something over twenty feet in diameter. Burleson said that the description and the location he received independently from Reno matched that given by the sheriff's daughter. Unfortunately the information was developed almost □y years too late to do researchers today any good.

Richard Ray, a reporter for FOX Channel 4 in the Dal as–Fort Worth area, also investigated the case in 2002. He spoke with the widow of Sheriff Clem and she told him, "Wel , he just said he'd seen a thing that lit down in that pasture with lights and al . It come down and then it went back up as fast as it come down."

Ray also interviewed a retired col ege professor, Nathan Tubb, who said,

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“In my opinion, there’s no way he would fabricate or embel ish something of this nature. He was an honorable person.”

□e real question is if Clem was so involved in this in 1957, why didn’t

he say anything at the time. Again, according to Burleson and to Clem’s daughter, “□e Air Force visited him a□er his sighting(s) and advised him to

‘drop it’ and forget that he had ever seen anything.”

□ere is another reason, and that was given to Ray during his

investigation in 2002. According to Ray, “In the meantime, Sheriff Clem was beginning to endure some ridicule.”

And his widow said, “He just got so he wouldn’t talk about it.”

Skeptics wil point out that the record in 1957 showed that Clem was only reported to have seen the object, or lights, in the distance, some nine hundred feet away, and they’l reject out of hand this new information. It is, a□er al , from the sheriff’s daughter, a secondhand witness, the sheriff’s widow, another secondhand witness, and a friend, a third secondhand witness. Al this was added to the case nearly □y years a□er the fact. In today’s world, it is interesting, but there is no way to verify it. Al these reports should be noted, but the weight given to them should be fairly light.

About the same time that Clem was out chasing the light, two highway

patrol officers and Constable Lloyd Bol en saw the UFO in the distance.

□ey were unable to get very close to it and reported the same sort of thing as Clem did official y, that is, a red glow in the distance. □at meant there were ve law enforcement officers who thought they had seen the object, though none reported they got very close to it and none saw much more than a streak of light in the distance.

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Remember, that was official y. Clem, remember, had gotten closer and saw an oval-shaped object, at least according to what his family said.

Also in that vicinity about that time was Ray Jones, the Level and Fire

Marshal. He was searching for an explanation for the many UFO reports that were being made that night. He saw a streak of light not far from him.

His lights dimmed and the engine sputtered until the object was gone, but he didn't report a shape for the object and he didn't report that his engine died completely.

Also part of the Air Force le on Level and was a report from a man living in Whiteface, Texas. He told Barth, "While driving north about 7

miles north of Sundown, Texas, I saw a light about the size of a basketbal about 200 or more feet above the ground traveling from east to west … a

bright red light giving off a glow…. An object above it seemed to hold up the light on a cable or hose appearing … between the light and the bal oon object above it. It continued swinging north to south 3 or 4 minutes by then at a fast rate of speed it went up into the clouds and disappeared the light went out."

Barth, a□er only a few hours in the Level and area, and a□er

interviewing only a few of the witnesses, thought he had solved some of the

sightings. As noted earlier, he believed he had come up with an explanation for one of the stal ed vehicles, that is, the broken rotor.

Of course, there were more reports of the car engines being stal ed, including that of Ronald Martin, which was investigated by the Air Force.

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And we can’t forget that the sheriff who, through his daughter, also said that his engine had stal ed. □e broken rotor scenario doesn’t explain those cases.

Nor does it explain why Saucedo’s truck began to operate once the UFO was out of sight.

Missing Witnesses

“Object observed for only few seconds, not lengthy period as implied

by press.”

□e Air Force investigator did not nd, nor did he apparently try to nd, some of the witnesses who were in Level and on November 2, but who had

returned to their homes by November 6. It is clear from the Air Force les that Barth didn’t speak to Jesse Long, of Waco, Texas, who said the object had kil ed his engine, which couldn’t be explained by the broken rotor in Saucedo’s truck. Nor did he nd or interview Jim Wheeler, Jose Alvarez, Ray Jones, or Frank Wil iams, the farmers near Petit, or the man driving from Seminole to Seagraves, al of whom said the proximity of the object had kil ed their car engines and dimmed their lights.

In an unclassi ed message to the commander of the Air Technical Intel igence Center, it was noted about the Level and sightings that “contrary to [Donald E.] Keyhoe’s [Director of NICAP] and Washington press reports only three, not nine persons witnessed the incident. Object observed for only few seconds, not lengthy period as implied by press. Mist, rain, thunderstorms and lightning discharges in scene of incident, fact not quoted in newspaper releases.”

Barth went on to propose a number of possible solutions that were speculative in nature. “□e amount of rain in the area, together with the condition of the crops, could have developed a phenomenon similar to St.

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Elmo's re…. □e possibility of burning excess gas from nearby oil operations re ecting off low clouds existed…. □e possibility of lightning stal ing a car and extinguishing the lights existed; however, the possibility decreases as the number of such incidents increases…. A check with the oil companies in the area revealed that a limited amount of excess gas from oil operations was being burned…. A check for downed power lines during the

period was made with negative results…. □e other witnesses reported in newspaper accounts as having observed the object had either disappeared or returned to their homes, leaving no forwarding addresses."

Barth apparently didn't press Clem or his deputies, nor did he interview the other law enforcement officers who saw the red light, nor did he talk to the re marshal. And, of course, he never learned about the burned area found in the prairie grass on the ranch north of town, or if he did, he didn't mention it in his reports back to Project Blue Book.

Of course, it could be said that Barth did talk to them about what they

had seen and that he wrote a second report that was not part of the Project Blue Book system. In fact, the NICAP UFO Investigator for January 1958

provides a hint of probability for this scenario. According to a letter to NICAP, Major General Joe Kel y admitted that UFO reports were classi ed

as "For Official Use Only" (FOUO, the lowest level of classi cation). □is was done, according to Kel y, to protect those witnesses who had requested anonymity.

He also retracted a statement in which he had suggested that NICAP had

been given al the UFO information that the Air Force had. Apparently, he had told a member of Congress that NICAP had everything that

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the Air Force had and was forced to admit that this wasn't true.

What we see in Barth's statements to Blue Book is a great deal of irrelevant material. □ere were thunderstorms, but those had dissipated by the time the sightings began, or so he claimed. Oil-re ning operations created gas that was burned and might have been re ected by the clouds,

though the residents of the area would be familiar with those operations and would have no motive to suddenly see strange objects in the re ections on the clouds. Besides, the oil companies said that very little of that burning had occurred on the dates in question.

Although the Air Force didn't interview them—and therefore to the Air

Force they didn't exist—there were a number of people, al named in various newspaper and other media stories, who did report their car engines and lights affected by the proximity of the UFO. Reporters and others did nd them and quote them in the newspapers. And rather than search for these

additional witnesses, the Air Force ignored them, suggesting in their responses to Keyhoe and NICAP that such people didn't exist, or if they did, they saw nothing of consequence. □e Air Force just attacked Keyhoe for his inaccurate statements, which today can be proven to be true. □ere were

more than three witnesses and in fact more than the nine claimed by Keyhoe.

So contrary to what the Air Force reported internal y, and suggested to

the press publicly, there were the number of witnesses claimed by Keyhoe. In fact, Keyhoe's number turns out to be too smal when the law enforcement officers are counted in the number. And the length of the sightings varied from a few seconds to several minutes. □e Air Force was attempting to suggest that the witnesses had seen, and

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misinterpreted, lightning ashes that somehow caused them to stal their vehicles.

□e Air Force did, to their satisfaction, solve the Level and case.

According to the Air Force les, “A□er very extensive checks and detailed investigations by the Air Force and with complete col aboration with both Air Force and non-governmental scientists it was concluded that the sighting was due to a very rare phenomena [sic], bal lightning. □e cause for the witnesses [sic] cars stopping could be attributed to the sudden disposition of moisture on distributor parts, especial y if moisture condensation nuclei were enhanced by increased atmospheric ionization. In one instance a faulty distributor was determined as being the cause of the motor stoppage.”

□e problem with this explanation is that the existence of bal lightning was in dispute in 1957. Bal lightning is extremely rare and there are no cases of it being reported in the same area multiple times. It ashes into existence, can penetrate wal s, or rol down the road, and then ashes out of existence. □ere is no mechanism reported or associated with bal lightning that would let it stal a car engine, dim headlights, or cause a radio to fade. It is only recently that science has been able to con rm the existence of bal lightning, so in 1957, the Air Force was reaching for an explanation just to write off the case. By 1957, the attitude in the Air Force investigation was to explain sightings rather than investigate them. Barth and his one-day search for witnesses shows just how important UFO reports were to them.

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Donald Keyhoe

□ere is one other fact that seems to have been missed in other studies of this case and might have an impact on it. Scientists, in attempting to replicate the dimming of lights and the suppression of the engines, could not produce a magnetic eld of sufficient strength to interrupt the ow of electrons to dim the lights and stop the engines. In their experiments, once the magnetic eld was eliminated, the engines failed to restart on their own.

□is suggested to them that the claims of the witnesses in Level and were in error and therefore could be ignored.

However, in a number of the cases, the witness said that the engines stal ed when the object approached, and they couldn't restart them. Once the object was gone, the engines started easily. Jesse Long and Newel Wright both said that they started their engines. Martin might not have had any engine trouble. □e records today are somewhat confusing.

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Of these witnesses, Barth only interviewed Newel Wright. Barth

believes that the wet weather caused his car to stal because the rotor had been compromised, meaning that it had gotten wet. While this certainly

would have caused the car to stal , it would have been an ongoing problem every time it rained or the weather was wet and there is no indication in the Blue Book le that such is the case. And it would have made restarting his car difficult until the rotor dried out.

What is important in this event is the number of independent witnesses

who told of the object in the area and added the dimension of dimmed lights, radio failure, and the stal ing of car engines. Many of the claims were made to the sheriff or police before there was any media attention for the sightings. □ose suggesting some sort of mass hysteria have a major stumbling block, and that is, how did these witnesses tel the same story within an hour or so of one another without hearing or reading the media reports that began the next day?

We should talk about this case in a scienti c vein. □ere is always talk of multiple chains of evidence, meaning that there are things going on besides the witness reports. Yes, this is one chain of evidence, and the fact that we have many who told of their experiences before there was media coverage is important. It is also important that the witnesses were scattered al over that area of Texas, meaning they didn’t know one another and didn’t know of one another’s sightings.

A second chain would be the interaction with the environment. Had the

Air Force acted quickly, we don’t know what they might have learned from the cars that had been stal ed. It wasn’t just Saucedo and his truck, but others in various makes of cars and farm equipment. Checking the big combines

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with dual engines might have yielded some interesting results, but the lone Air Force investigator never thought of that and didn't even know about some of the witnesses. □e evidence and witness testimony ended up being

ignored.

□e third chain of evidence is, of course, the burned area that had been

reported to Sheriff Clem. Yes, we learned of it decades a□er the fact, but Burleson did nd two independent witnesses for it. Again, we don't know

what sort of information might have been found by a proper scienti c investigation of that area because one wasn't made in 1957. In the days fol owing the report, a great deal of information might have been determined by a careful scienti c study of the burned area. But, of course, a

burned area is physical evidence of the event, and the Air Force was busy attempting to prove that nothing had happened other than a couple of panicked citizens and a col ege student who reported the glowing UFO that stal ed their car engines and put out their headlights.

We had witnesses to a brightly lighted cra□ that landed. We had interaction with the environment in the form of what is cal ed electromagnetic effects. And we had landing traces in the form of the burned areas. □ree different chains of evidence for this case. □e only thing that might have made it better would be good-quality photographs or a piece of material from the cra□.

Instead the Air Force responded with a single NCO who talked to a few

people over the course of a day and then le□, concluding that Saucedo's rotor had failed, no one saw much of anything, and that too many people started talking about UFOs too quickly a□er the fact.

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□e Air Force investigator made much of the fact that within days of the sighting, hundreds of others were tel ing tales of low-level ying saucers and their electromagnetic effects. Once the story was out in the newspapers, on the radio, and told on television, then a “mass hysteria” could kick in. But that doesn’t explain the sightings in Level and late on the night of November 2 and very early in the morning of November 3.

It could just as easily be suggested that Level and marked not the beginning of the wave of UFO reports, but marked the middle of it. □e increased number of reports to the Air Force a□er the Level and sighting might be explained in a simple fashion. People, now realizing that the Air Force was gathering the information about UFOs, now felt an obligation to report what they had seen. □e story sparked not a series of sightings but a series of reports, a subtle but real difference.

It might be said that □omas Mantel was the rst pilot kiled chasing a

UFO, but he certainly wasn’t the last. □roughout the modern history of

UFOs, there are many incidents in which pilots have been lost while attempting to intercept UFOs. As with the Mantel case, the government response was less than candid, and in some of those cases, it can be suggested that the cover-up was in place before the security lid was clamped down.

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Truax Air Force Base

On November 23, 1953, radar operators at Truax Air Force Base picked up

an unidenti ed return over the Soo Locks area in the Great Lakes region and in what was designated then as restricted air space. Because of that, a ghter was scrambled from Kinross Field to intercept and identify the intruder. Given the date, in the middle of the cold war, such a reaction was not al that unusual.

What was unusual was what happened. □e Air Force ghter found the

object and ew toward it. □e blips merged on the radar screen, which didn't alarm the operators because one object could easily have passed over the other, but the blips never separated.

According to the official Air Force report on this aircra□ accident:

F-89C, Serial No. 51-5853A, assigned to the 433rd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, Truax Field, Wisconsin, was reported missing over Lake Superior at approximately 2000 Eastern Standard Time (EST) on 23 November 1953. □e

aircra□ was scrambled from Kinross Air Force Base, Michigan to participate in an Active Air Defense Mission. □e aircra□ and crew had not been located as of 1 January 1954.

On 23 November 1953, F-89C, Serial No. 51-5853A, was scrambled by

"Naples" [which would be their cal sign] GCI [Ground Control ed Intercept]

to intercept and identify an unknown aircra□ ying over Lake Superior. □e interceptor became airborne from Kinross Air Force base, Michigan at 1833

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EST. Original radar control of the aircra was maintained by “Naples” GCI and at 1841 EST control was transferred to “Pil ow” GCI. e aircra was ying at 30,000 feet at this time. At 1847 EST, at the request of “Pil ow” the aircra

descended to 7000 feet to begin the interception. Location of the aircra was then approximately 150 miles northeast from Kinross AFB and over northern Lake Superior. At 1851 EST, the interceptor pilot was requested to turn to a heading of 20 degrees to the cutoff vector. A er the turn was completed, the pilot was advised the unidenti ed aircra was at 11 o’clock, 10 miles distant.

Radar returns from both aircra were then seen to merge on “Pil ow’s”

radarscope. e radar return from the other aircra indicated it was continuing on its original ight path, while the return from the F-89

disappeared from the GCI station’s radarscope.

e unknown aircra being intercepted was a Royal Canadian Air Force Dakota C-47), Serial No. VC-912, ying from Winnipeg to Sudbury, Canada.

At the time of the interception, it was crossing Northern Lake Superior from west to east at 7,000 feet.

e pilot [First Lieutenant Felix Moncla, Jr.] and radar observer [Second Lieutenant R. R. Wilson] were assigned to the 433rd Fighter-Interceptor Squadron, Truax AFB, Wisconsin. ey were on temporary duty at Kinross AFB, Michigan, while the base’s regularly assigned personnel were ring gunnery at Yuma, Arizona. e pilot had a total of 811:00 hours of which 121:00 hours were in F-89 type aircra . He had 101:00 instrument hours and 91:50 hours night time. e radar observer had a total of 206:45 hours of which 11:30 hours were at night.

Search for the missing aircra was conducted by both USAF and RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force] aircra without success. Al civilian

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reports of seeing or hearing the aircra were investigated with negative results.

e Air Force solution then, as it is now, is that the unidenti ed target, that is, the UFO, was the Canadian plane, though the Canadian government continues to deny this. e Air Force said that the F-89 was never closer than several miles to the Canadian aircra and has no explanation why the F-89 disappeared a er the blips merged. Although they haven't said it, it would seem that a col ision between the two planes would have knocked them both out of the sky rather than just the jet.

Other sources provided additional and relevant information. According

to those documents, radar at Truax Air Force Base picked up an unidenti ed blip over the Soo Locks in restricted airspace. Since it was unidenti ed, an interceptor was scrambled. Ground radar vectored the jet toward the UFO.

Wilson, the radar officer, said that he was unable to nd the object on his radar, so the ground radars continued to vector the jet toward the object that had seemed to be hovering but was beginning to accelerate as it headed out over the lake.

(R)adar operators at Truax Air Force Base picked up an unidentified return over the Soo Locks area in the Great Lakes region and in what

was designated then as restricted airspace.

For nine minutes the chase continued with Moncla able to gain slightly on the UFO and Wilson nal y able to get a x on it. e gap between the jet and the UFO narrowed, closed, and then merged as Moncla caught the UFO

out over the lake.

At rst no one was concerned about this because the ground radar had

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no height- nding capability and it was possible the jet had own over or under the object, but the blips didn’t separate. □ey hung together and then the lone blip ashed off the screen. □e jet, apparently, was gone.

Attempts to reach Moncla by radio, including the emergency frequency,

failed. Radar operators cal ed for Search and Rescue, providing the last known position of the jet. □rough the night they continued to search, later joined by the Canadians. □ey found nothing. □ey found no clue about the

fate of the jet or the crew. No wreckage and no sign that the crew had bailed out.

An early edition of the Chicago Tribune carried a story about the accident with the ground-based radar operator’s opinion that the jet had hit something in the sky. While the search continued, the Air Force moved to suppress the idea that the jet had hit anything.

Although a wel -coordinated search was conducted, and everyone

thought they knew where the jet had been because of the radar tracking, they never found anything. □ere was no wreckage, no oil slick, no bodies, nothing. □e last trace of the jet had been when the two radar blips merged.

In 1976, a□er the Air Force had declassi ed the Project Blue Book les, I had a chance to go through them at Maxwel Air Force Base. One of the rst les that I asked to see was that on the Kinross case. I knew the date and location and the archivist brought the le into the smal reading and study room that I was using as a base to review the material.

□e le contained only two sheets of paper. One of them was a single

sheet that suggested that Moncla and Wilson were lost chasing a Canadian aircra□. It was just the briefest summary and added nothing to what I already knew.

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Later, in one of the reports about the progress of the UFO investigation, there was more information. According to this report:

□is incident was not reported to ATIC as a UFO sighting and therefore we have no case le. Due to the great amount of public interest in this incident, ATIC contacted the Flying Safety Division at Norton AFB, California for information pertaining to this aircra□ accident. It was determined from Norton AFB that the F-89 was scrambled to intercept an unidenti ed aircra□

which was successful y accomplished. □e aircra□ was reported in as a Dakota (Canadian C-47). From the time that the F-89 started to return to the base nothing of what happened is de nitely known. It is presumed by the officials at Norton AFB that the pilot probably suffered from vertigo and crashed into the lake. □e wreckage has never been recovered. □is case is carried in Air Force Accident Records.

What is interesting here is that the writer of this document said, without equivocation, that the unknown was identi ed as the Canadian aircra□ and that the F-89 was returning to base when it crashed into the lake because the pilot suffered vertigo. It is interesting that the writer of the short report said that what happened was not de nitely known but then suggested pilot error, or rather an episode of vertigo, caused the loss of the aircra□. In other words, in that short paragraph, he seemed to contradict himself.

□e Menzel Solution

“It was determined from Norton AFB that the F-89 was scrambled to

intercept an unidentified aircra□ which was successfully

accomplished.”

Dr. Donald H. Menzel had little of relevance to say, but a gal ey from one of his UFO books was also included in the Project Blue Book case le. He went even further with his analysis of the case than did the Air Force. Fol owing the Air Force line, he wrote, “□e jet

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successful y accomplished its mission and identi ed the unknown as a Dakota, a Canadian C-47. On its return to base, however, the Air Force jet crashed into Lake Michigan and, as o□en happens when a plane crashes into deep water and the exact place of the crash is not known, no wreckage was ever found."

Without critical thought, Menzel has bought into the Air Force

explanation. And then he adds to it. He wrote, "As the ground radar at Kinross had tracked the returning jet, the scope picked up a phantom echo in the neighborhood of the jet; the two blips had seemed to merge just as both went off the scope."

□ere is no indication that anyone thought that the blip was a phantom,

and in fact, it was the unidenti ed blip that had initiated the interception.

Menzel was inventing an explanation to satisfy himself but without bene t of evidence. □is is something that he would do repeatedly as he attempted to explain al UFO sightings in the mundane. He was incapable of admitting that there might be something anomalous in a case that wouldn't necessarily invoke the extraterrestrial.

He continued in that vein: "Since the crash was not reported as a UFO

incident and did not involve any question of unidenti ed ying objects, ATIC was not asked to investigate."

□is is, of course, the Air Force explanation, but it is in error. If there had been no unidenti ed ying object, there wouldn't have been an interception.

□e identi cation of that object, which the Air Force, and Menzel, said was a

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Canadian aircra□, does not mean there was no initial UFO sighting. And since the identi cation of it is disputed by the Canadians, it remains as unidenti ed. □e Air Force dodged the truth by claiming this was an aircra□

accident and claiming that there had been no UFO.

But it is clear that Menzel was making up answers and while it might be

difficult to prove on this speci c case, it is not when looking at the report led by Clyde Tombaugh, the astronomer who discovered Pluto.

In 1949, at 10:45 P.M., Tombaugh, his wife, and his mother-in-law saw something strange in the night sky. □e ful report is now housed at the J.

Al en Hynek Center for UFO Studies in Chicago, and I have held the original report in my hands.

Tombaugh wrote, “I happened to be looking at the zenith … when suddenly I spied a geometrical group of faint bluish-green rectangles of light.… As the group moved south-southeasterly, the individual rectangles became foreshortened, their space of formation smal er … and their intensity dul er, fading from view at about 35 degrees above the horizon….

My wife thought she saw a faint connecting glow across the structure.”

Menzel, the UFO debunker and critic of anyone who suggested that any

UFOs are anything other than misidenti cations or hoaxes, was able to solve the sighting quickly. He suggested that “a low, thin layer of haze or smoke re ected the lights of a distant house or some other multiple source.”

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Tombaugh, who saw the objects, replied to Menzel, who didn't see them,

writing, "I doubt that the phenomenon was any terrestrial re ection, because in that case some similarity to it should have appeared many times

… nothing of the kind has ever appeared before or since."

Eyewitnesses to Kinross?

While I was studying at the University of Iowa, I had the opportunity to speak with an Air Force officer who had been assigned to Truax Air Force Base at the time of the incident. He remembered because you don't forget an incident in which two aircra crewmen and their ghter disappear off the radar screen to never return.

He said that there had been a number of UFO sightings in that area during that time frame, which, of course, is not part of the Blue Book

file.

He told me there were two schools of thought about the disappearance

of the aircra . e rst, smal er school, was that something had happened to Moncla or to the aircra and it had crashed straight into the lake. If the airplane did not break up, or if the crash site was smal enough, then searchers the next day might never have found the evidence.

But, the second, larger school, was that whatever it had been, whatever

Moncla and Wilson had chased, it had "taken" them. He repeated that the

two blips had merged and that they never separated. To some of those, on the scene that November night, it meant that Moncla and

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Wilson had been

“kidnapped.”

He added something that is relevant. He said that there had been a number of UFO sightings in that area during that time frame, which, of course, is not part of the Blue Book le. In fact, not long a□er Moncla and Wilson were lost, a smal ight of ghters found themselves being paced by another UFO in that area. □e UFO did nothing but stay close to them.

Final y, the ight leader said that on his command, the ight would turn into the UFO to see what it would do. He was ful y aware of what had happened to Moncla and Wilson but gave the order anyway. As they turned toward the UFO, it shot away in a burst of speed.

Here’s where the story gets interesting. He knew that I was on my way to Maxwel Air Force Base to look at the Blue Book les. He said that they had

led a number of UFO reports from the base and he wondered what conclusions had been drawn. □ere were no listings for any UFO sightings

in that area at that time and the Kinross Case was marked “INFO ONLY,”

which meant it wasn’t a case at al .

□e Aircra□ Found?

□at’s where the story ended for decades. □e Air Force had downplayed

the UFO report claiming it was an unidenti ed aircra□ so it wasn’t reported as a UFO. □ose in UFO groups suggested that this was another case in which Air Force officers had been kil ed during a UFO investigation; the others included the two officers kil ed during the Maury Island hoax and

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omas Mantel kil ed chasing a UFO in Kentucky.

But then, in 2006, an out t known as Great Lake Dive Company claimed

they had found the wreckage of the aircra sitting on the bottom of Lake Superior in about ve hundred feet of water. On their website,

www.greatlakesdive.com, was a photograph of an aircra that could be the missing F-89. It was in surprisingly good shape considering it had crashed into the lake in 1953.

If this was the missing jet, then one question had been answered. We would know what happened to the aircra. If Great Lake Dive succeeded in getting down to the aircra and could verify that it was the missing jet, then they might be able to suggest something about the fate of the two men on board.

ere were some, inside the UFO community, who cautioned that we should wait for more information before making any sort of judgment about the case. Finding the wreckage of an aircra that could be an F-89 doesn't automatical y mean that it was the one own by Moncla and Wilson. What

we had was the possible solution to a mystery.

Or rather it seemed that way, but like so much else in the UFO eld, there was another side to the story. Gord Heath wrote to UFO magazine in November 2006 reporting on his investigation of the claims by Great Lake Dives. He posted the same to UFO UpDates in January 2007. Fol owing is

his letter.

Dear Editor,

I read your article on the al eged discovery of the missing F-89 in your November issue and was quite surprised to note that it

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contained no mention that this discovery is now widely believed to be a hoax. Also, contrary to the

brief fol ow-up comments by Dirk Vander Ploeg in the December issue of UFO magazine, there seems to be nothing of the story which can be veri ed.

Many individuals have checked into this story and it seems that no one has yet been able to verify even the most basic information. I am sure that your readers would be interested to know the ndings of the investigation by James Carrion, international director of MUFON, into the claims of Adam Jimenez. I wil brie y summarize the ndings:

1) No one has yet been able to verify the existence of “Great Lakes Dive Company” (GLDC) which Jimenez claimed to be an incorporated company

or LLC in the state of Michigan.

2) No one in the Great Lakes shipwreck searching community or dive community seems to have any knowledge of Great Lakes Dive Company as

an organization actively involved in the searches they mentioned on their web site.

3) No one seems to have any basic information about Adam Jimenez to validate he is who he claims to be, such as an address or current phone number.

4) While the GLDC web site was operational, no photographs of team members, boats or sonar equipment were ever posted to the website to document their al eged discovery.

5) Some experts in the eld of side scan sonar believe the al eged sonar images may be fakes.

6) □e initial story quoted in an email that was forwarded to the UFO Updates list appears to be faked as an Associated Press story from a

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Port Huron, Michigan publication.

It should be noted that Adam Jimenez claimed to have video recordings obtained from an ROV survey of the al eged F-89. He claimed that the tail code was visible in the video and that the canopy of the cra was intact, implying that the crew were stil inside. Despite these claims, he never shared any of this evidence with any of the family of the missing pilot, Lt. Gene [most reports suggest his name was Felix] Moncla.

It is unfortunate that persisting questions surrounding the mysterious disappearance have largely been side-stepped in your coverage of what seems to be an elaborate hoax. I have spent many years researching this incident and my ndings are published on the UFOBC website at www.ufobc.ca/kinross. I am sure your readers wil be quite interested to know that parts from a military jet aircra were found in the bush near the eastern shore of Lake Superior back in October 1968. A photograph of the tail stabilizer is shown with an Ontario

Provincial Police officer and USAF officer on the front page of the Sault Daily Star newspaper, accompanying articles about the discovery. It appears that the identity of the mystery jet was never released to the public and the Canadian government claims they have no le records of this discovery. Were these parts from the missing F-89?

e article in UFO Magazine also reprints a map which erroneously places the last position of the F-89 in the accident report as being at coordinates 45

degrees 00 minutes north at a location near Sturgeon Bay, Michigan. e actual coordinates are printed in several locations such as the Search and Rescue report prepared by the RCAF and in several telexes. Al state the last coordinates were 48 degrees 00 minutes north and 86 degrees 49 minutes west, north of the US Canada border over Lake Superior.

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In closing, I wish to bring to your attention the photograph which you published in your magazine of Lt. Moncla contains no caption mentioning this photograph was provided to me by his sister, Leonie Shannon and his cousin, Carol Campbel . I don't know where you obtained the photograph but I know it has been published several times on the web since we rst posted it in an article printed in the UFOBC quarterly and now posted on our web page devoted

to

the

missing

pilot

www.ufobc.ca/kinross/persons/personsMonclaMain.htm.

1 enjoyed reading many of the other articles in your November issue, but I couldn't restrain myself from responding to your articles referring to the missing F-89.

Yours truly,

Gord Heath

UFOBC

It should be clear from this that the missing F-89 has not be found.

While the most probable explanation is that the aircra is at the bottom of the lake, we don't know that for certain. ere is always the possibility that it was "taken" by the UFO and is now on display on some distant planet as an artifact from a primitive world.

Walesvil e, New York, 1954

According to various UFO writers and researchers, including Donald Keyhoe (Aliens from Space, pp. 26–27), on July 1, 1954 "an unknown

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ying object was tracked over New York State by Griffiss AFB radar. An F-94

Star re jet was scrambled and the pilot climbed steeply toward the target, guided by his radar observer. When the gleaming disc-shaped machine became visible he started to close in."

Keyhoe continued, "Abruptly a furnacelike heat l ed both cockpits.

Gasping for breath, the pilot jettisoned the canopy. □rough a blur of heat waves he saw the radar operator bail out. Stunned, without even thinking, he ejected himself from the plane."

Keyhoe then noted, "□e F-94, screaming down into Walesvil e, N.Y., smashed though a building and burst into ames. Plunging on, the ery wreckage careened into a car. Four died in the holocaust—a man and his wife and their two infant children. Five other Walesvil e residents were injured, two of them seriously."

If al this could be factual y established, that is, that the jet crashed as a result of the actions of a UFO, then we have big news. UFOs aren't just harmless lights in the sky, but can result in tragedy on the ground.

Keyhoe wasn't alone in his belief of a UFO attack on an Air Force interceptor. Otto Binder, writing in What We Real y Know about Flying Saucers (1967), suggested that it was the radar officer who saw the UFO and pointed it out to the pilot. □e pilot turned the aircra□ to get a better look and when the cockpit l ed with heat, both men bailed out. Binder claimed that both men were interrogated at length by Air Force investigators who concluded that they were not responsible for the crash. According to Binder, there was only one source for the heat and that was the UFO. Binder said that his account was based on Air Force Records, which is true, to an extent.

□ere was also a great deal of interpretation in Binder's account.

J. Al en Hynek and Jacques Val ee, in □e Edge of Reality (1975), discussed the case. Val ee suggested that there had been a dense

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cloud cover and that the UFO had been picked up on radar. Two jets were scrambled,

one that remained in the clouds and the second that climbed to a higher altitude. When it broke through into clear sky, the pilot saw the UFO

coming at him. □e cockpit l ed with heat and both men believe the aircra□

was about to burst into ames. □ey bailed out and landed safely, but the aircra□ crashed into Walesvil e, creating the tragedy.

An engine from the F-94 that crashed in Walesville, New York, a□er a heated encounter with a UFO in 1954.

Hynek said the case wasn't documented but Val ee said, "Yes, it is documented. It was even mentioned in the New York Times the next day."

So, what are the facts in this case? According to both news and official sources, there was a UFO sighting over Rome, New York, on

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July 2, but in the evening, hours a□er the jet crash. □e New York Times for July 3

reported:

UTICA. N.Y., July 2 (AP)—A silvery, bal oon-like object oating over the Utica area tonight sent residents rushing to their telephones to make inquiries of newspapers, police and radio stations.

□e Utica Press estimated that more than 1,000 cal s about the object jammed its switchboard between 6 and 10 P.M. It was reported by residents in a twenty-

ve mile radius extending from Rome on the west to Frankfort, east of Utica.

Col. Milton F. Summerfelt, commandant of the Air Force Depot at Rome, said the object appeared to be a plastic bal oon about forty feet long and partial y de ated. He theorized that it was making a gradual descent and said that if it was stil in the area tomorrow morning a plane would be sent to investigate.

A Mohawk Airlines pilot estimated the altitude of the object at about 20,000

feet. He said he saw a light apparently shining from it.

When it broke through into clear sky, the pilot saw the UFO coming at

him. □e cockpit filled with heat and both men believe the aircra□ was

about to burst into flames.

For some reason, Keyhoe and some of the others have given the July 1

date for the bal oon sighting and sometimes for the jet crash as wel . A confusion of the two events might explain how the description of a disc-shaped object originated. Since both incidents were reported in

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the same general area and on the same day, the confusion is understandable.

□e Project Blue Book les tel the jet-crash story in a slightly different way from that given by Keyhoe, Val ee, and others. Neither incident is part of Blue Book's official record. □e index for Blue Book, which does list the accident, also notes it is "info" only, and lists the "witnesses" as Len String eld and others. I suppose I should point out that String eld, living in Ohio, did not make an on-site investigation and didn't witness the incident.

He reported it in his privately published newsletter and that is what made him a "witness" in the Air Force le.

According to the "Summary of Circumstances" which is part of the official Air Force le on the case:

□e F-94C took off at 11:05 AM EST for an operational training mission out of Griffiss Air Force Base, New York on 2 July 1954. □e aircra□ was only a few miles out when the Griffiss control tower operator cal ed the pilot to advise that he was being diverted to an active air defense mission. A vector of 60

degrees and 10,000 feet altitude was given to intercept an unidenti ed aircra□.

□e pilot experienced some difficulty nding this aircra□ and the control er informed him of a second unidenti ed aircra□ in the area. □is aircra□ was

[subsequently] identi ed [by the pilot] as an Air Force C-47, tail number 6099.

At this time there were no indications of F-94 malfunctions as stated by the pilot and the C-47 pilot.

What this tel s us is that the unidenti ed object was later identi ed as a C-47. □e F-94C was not, in fact, scrambled to intercept a UFO as

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suggested by some, but was already airborne when diverted to the active mission.

However, it is true that the aircra was asked to identify an unknown target, which, in layman's terms, is a UFO.

Once the C-47 was identi ed:

e ground control er gave the F-94C pilot a heading of 240 degrees as a vector back to the rst unidenti ed aircra. e F-94C was at 8,000 feet, ying about the tops of broken clouds, so the pilot started to descend below the clouds. It was evident that the unidenti ed aircra was going to Griffiss Air Force Base. During the descent there was intense heat in the cockpit and the engine plenum chamber re warning light came on. e pilot shut down the

engine and the light remained on. Due to critical low altitude and the re warning, the pilot and the radar observer ejected and were recovered without injury.

e Air Force report says nothing about the aircra being scrambled, a

disc-shaped UFO, or a heat ray, as alleged by some UFO writers.

Clearly, based on this, the other UFO, the one the pilot couldn't nd at rst, was in the traffic pattern for the Air Force base. e identity, though not established by the pilot, was by the tower crew and the mission had ended. e UFOs were both military aircra.

I think this is where the idea there were two jets involved came from.

ere were two attempted intercepts but by only one aircra. I have seen notations suggesting a second jet, but the evidence in the case le doesn't bear this out.

e other point that needs to be made here is that there was not a dense

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cloud cover. □e term “broken clouds” relates to the portion of the sky obscured by clouds. □is means there were some clouds but they did not obscure the whole sky, and given the various altitudes for those clouds, it

could have meant that from the cockpit, little of the sky was hidden. In other words, the clouds might not be relevant.

□e report ended by saying, “□e aircra□ traveled about four miles from

the point of ejection and, while on a heading of 199 degrees, crashed into the Walesvil e intersection at 11:27 AM EST. □e aircra□ struck a dwel ing, kil ing a housewife and injuring her daughter, then struck an auto at an intersection, kil ing al three occupants.”

□e Air Force report says nothing about the aircra□ being scrambled, a

disc-shaped UFO, or a heat ray, as al eged by some UFO writers. □ere is, in fact, no reason to suggest that this case has anything to do with UFOs, other than the assumptions made by Keyhoe in the 1950s and those who fol owed

a□er that.

Keyhoe, in fact, gets the identities of the civilians kil ed wrong.

According to the New York Times for Saturday, July 3, 1954, “□ose kil ed were Stanley Phil ips, 38, his wife, Florence, 32, and their son Gary, 11, al of neighboring Hecla, and Mrs. Doris Monroe, 28, occupant of one of the houses.”

□e Air Force conducted an investigation into the accident, but this report was sealed for many years. Given that the Air Force-sponsored University of Colorado UFO study, that is, the Condon Committee, had access to many official documents, it may not be surprising they did not create a UFO le for this incident because there was no UFO involved.

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With or without a UFO, there is the question of what caused the heat in

the cockpit. Was there a re on the F-94C, and if so, what caused it? Was the malfunction of the aircra in any way mysterious?

Until years a er the crash, these questions could not be answered de nitively because the accident report was stil in the government archives.

But upon the request of Jan Aldrich, the report was declassi ed and released. e general details of the accident are basical y the same as reported by Keyhoe and the others. e key nding in the accident investigation is in paragraph three of the summary statement:

Investigation revealed the primary cause of the accident to be a malfunction of the aircra re detector circuit. e cause of the malfunction could not be

determined. e pilot's decision to abandon the aircra was consistent with the emergency instructions contained in the F-94C Flight Handbook.

A thorough examination of the plane's air conditioning and

pressurization system indicated no evidence of smoke, fuel, or oil, which would have been generated by a re. e pilot had own the aircra on a

previous ight that same day and had found it necessary to adjust the cockpit temperature manual y several times. e air vents were set so that pressurized air was being directed into the cockpit.

e report suggests that "Inasmuch as the pilot acknowledged changing

the engine power settings and ight altitude during his attempted second interception, it appears that the pilot interpreted a normal,

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non-automatical y control ed temperature rise as an overheat cockpit condition.

Since there was no evidence of an in ight re, the re warning indication received was probably due to a malfunction of the re warning circuit."

□is accident then became a terrible bit of bad luck as the

malfunctioning of the re warning occurred just as the cockpit was being heated from normal aircra□ operations. Fol owing procedures, a□er the warning continued, the pilot shut down the engines and he and his radar

observer bailed out, leaving the pilotless plane to crash in Walesvil e. As a relevant aside, another conclusion of the report was that the Air Force's inspection requirements for the F-94C re and overheat warning circuits were inadequate.

□e accident report was completed on August 17, 1954, before Keyhoe

wrote Flying Saucer Conspiracy. If he had been given access to the document, or at least was provided with the relevant conclusions by Air Force spokesmen, the confusion over Walesvil e might never have happened.

Instead, given the understandable con dentiality requirements of military accident investigators, Keyhoe and other writers were le□ to speculate about the cause of the heat in the cockpit and the cause of the crash.

In any event, the Walesvil e case, like that of the death of □omas Man-

tel in 1948, should be removed from the UFO les. □ere was no UFO

involved in this tragedy, though there certainly were momentarily unidenti ed aircra□.

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Fawcett and Greenwood in their book, □e UFO Cover-up (which

original y was titled Clear Intent) wrote, “Without the ful details of the crash, it is impossible to determine what caused the jet to malfunction.”

Kevin Randle.

□en they go on to write, “In the Encyclopedia of UFOs, edited by Ron

Story (Doubleday Dolphin, 1980), an entry by Kevin Randle attempts to explain away the Wales-vil e crash as nothing more than an engine re which poured heat into the cockpit. His “documented evidence” is a news

clipping from the New York Times. If the author of the entry had truly been interested in documented evidence other than a newspaper clipping, he would have noticed that the accident report on Walesvil e contained the fol owing conclusions: ‘Investigation of the wreckage disclosed no in- ight re. □e cause of the malfunction in the fire warning system could not be determined.’(Emphasis in the original.)”

Of course, had they bothered to read what I had written, they would have realized that I was quoting Jacques Val ee. □e sentence in

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question is,

“Jacques Val ee claimed that the case was documented, and it was even reported in □e New York Times.”

Documentation available today suggests, as noted earlier, there was no

re anywhere on or in the aircra□, but there was a malfunction in the re

warning system that suggested a re. □e pilot, identi ed as Lt. Wil iam E.

Atkins in various sources, thought that because the cockpit was extremely hot, and because of the warning light, that the aircra□ was on re. Fawcett and Greenwood wrote that “he [the pilot] alerted the radar operator, Lt.

Henry Condon [identi ed in some sources as Coudon], placed the throttle

in the idle position, waited four seconds, then stop-cocked the throttle. A□er waiting another four seconds, Atkins and Condon successful y bailed out.”

□ey then added, “So, while we have no speci c evidence that the aircra□ was attacked by a UFO, the cause of the crash remains unknown to this day. Is it merely coincidence that the jet developed a fault during a UFO

chase or …?”

Except everything points to the UFO, or UFOs, being identi ed as aircra□ or the partial y de ated bal oon. □ese resolutions were reached independent of the Air Force investigation. □ere is no UFO in the classic sense involved in this case. □e cause of the accident is the malfunctioning re warning light and the only thing not explained is

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the sensation of extreme heat in the cockpit that suggested to the pilot, along with the warning light, that the aircra was on re.

Unlike the Kinross case, this is a tragic accident that resulted in the deaths of four civilians on the ground. e Air Force got this one right. It isn't a UFO case, but an aircra accident.

e Metcalf Sighting, 1955

Kinross is certainly not the only case of disappearing aircra in UFO

history. Eugene Metcalf, from Paris, Il inois, reported that he had seen a ghter disappear as it chased a ying saucer. According to an affidavit signed by Metcalf:

On March 9, 1955, at approximately 5:50 P.M. I witnessed the "planenapping"

of a jet plane while standing in my backyard at Paris, Il inois. e plane was coming toward me from the southwest and was traveling in a northeasterly direction. As I stood watching this plane, an odd-looking cra came from behind the plane and just swal owed it. e U.F.O. had an opening that was in my line of vision, and through the opening it took the plane. A er this, the U.F.O. hovered and pulsated and churned up and down. en it seemed to whirl and li upwards.

While going through these gyrations, vapor came from porthole-like openings around the bottom part. e plane and U.F.O. were in perfect view, and stood out clearly against the sky. e object was bright silver and I heard no noise.

e U.F.O. was very big and bel -shaped.

e affidavit was signed by Metcalf on April 2, 1957, in Edgar County,

Il inois. Signing an affidavit, in and of itself, does not prove that the witness is tel ing the truth, but it does suggest a certain level of belief in the tale.

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Metcalf was going to a lot of trouble to prove to others he had seen what he had described.

Other documentation suggested that Metcalf “sent letters describing this action to the fol owing: □e Chicago American newspaper: comment, none.

Newsweek: comment, would like to print letter if room is found; Civil Air Patrol, comment, rst said was American cra□, then said they didn’t know.

Who does? Federal Bureau of Investigation: they thanked me for my information, so maybe some one of them wil get their eyes opened.”

A similar statement by Metcalf appears in the Project Blue Book les about the case. He added some detail to it by writing:

A very curious sighting. I have tried in vain to nd out more about al this but have been unable to do so. My actions were not for publicity nor I stil do not want it. However, I would like to know more about this, your help wil be appreciated. I have observed this cra□ for several years. In fact, I was

wondering about them before the rst publication on ying saucers. I stil see either this cra□ or one similar quite frequently. I could write several pages and stil not mention al I have seen of these phenomena.

He signed it with his name, which the Air Force redacted when the Blue

Book les were made public in 1976.

What is more interesting is a letter from the Air Technical Intel igence Center, on their official letterhead, and directed to the Commander of the 4602nd Air Intel igence Service Squadron at Ent Air Force Base in Colorado.

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In it, they are asking for the 4602nd to investigate the case. According to the letter, the sighting was “given prominence by the Telonic Research Center, a private UFO research organization with a fairly wide membership.”

It was also noted, in that letter, that “with reference to Mr. Metcalf’s statement of the observed UFO ‘swal owing an aircra□,’ your investigation should include the determination if any bomber-jet parasite ‘pick-up’ tests were conducted in the vicinity of the al eged sighting.”

At the bottom of the second page of the letter was the response from the 4602nd. It was brief and said, “As requested, a complete investigation has been made by Flight 3-A, 4602d AISS.

“2. Results of this investigation strongly indicate that the source is completely unreliable.”

□e problem here is that anyone who said he or she had seen a UFO on

more than one occasion was considered unreliable by the Air Force.

□is was signed by Major John D. Taylor, Jr., who was the adjutant of the squadron.

□is means, quite clearly, that the Air Force got involved, but there is nothing in the le to suggest they searched for any “parasite” pickups, or that they did much of anything, other than respond that Metcalf was unreliable.

□e problem here is that anyone who said he or she had seen a UFO on more than one occasion was considered unreliable by the Air Force. □eir

term for that was repeater.

Len String eld, a very trusted UFO investigator who lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, added something to the case a□er his investigation

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in 1956. According to his investigative notes, which were dictated on August 26, 1956, String eld asked a friend, identi ed only as Fitch in Cleveland, to investigate Metcalf.

Fitch, unlike the Air Force, believed that Metcalf was sincere and that he, Metcalf, believed to have seen exactly what he claimed to have seen.

String eld also had a note in his les that he thought of Fitch as reliable and intel igent.

In 2000, I received an email from a fel ow in Cleveland who believed that the Fitch mentioned by String eld was his grandfather. □e letter said that his grandfather “and a friend saw something that neither could ever explain.

From what he told me, he would never have believed the stories if he had not seen for himself.”

□is doesn’t tel us much, but does suggest that Fitch was predisposed to believe UFO tales, even one as wild as that told by Metcalf. And, of course, provides for no new corroboration of Metcalf’s claim. □is is an interesting story told by a man who provided nothing in the way of proof for what he had seen.

□e Schaffner Disappearance, 1970

□is is a story which, when super cial y examined, seems to mirror that of Felix Moncla, Jr. and R. R. Wilson. It is about a ghter pilot, Captain Wil iam Schaffner, who, while on an intercept of an unknown object, disappeared a□er witnessing a bril iant ash of blue light. Radar stations watching the intercept reported that the blips merged and then the lone blip disappeared and the aircra□ was gone.

But the facts of the case paint a slightly different but no less tragic version of events. It was only a□er the classi ed les of the case and the investigation were released that this case could be understood ful y.

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□e story, as told in UFO circles, is quite dramatic and seems to provide solid evidence that something strange, something alien, had visited on the evening of September 8, 1970. It started, according to some sources, at 8:18

P.M. when radar on an island north of the Shetland Islands picked up an object as 37,000 feet, traveling at 630 miles an hour. Nothing extraordinary about that as it could have easily been a commercial airliner. It then changed direction turning toward the south and picked up both speed and altitude. It was clearly no longer a commercial airliner, but was not operating outside the limits of a military jet, especial y some of the secret reconnaissance cra□

available to various air forces.

Two jet ghters were launched from RAF Leuchars in eastern Scotland

but the object reversed direction, now heading north, and shot off the radar screen. Its speed was believed to be about seventeen thousand miles per hour, much too fast for any military aircra□.

Over the next hour, the object, or one similar to it, reappeared on various radar screens, and according to UFO researchers, intercepts were attempted. Two F-4 Phantoms were scrambled from Iceland, but they were

unable to nd the UFO.

According to the stories that were published later, radars as far away as Cheyenne Mountain, the NORAD Headquarters in Colorado, tracked the UFO. □ere were more attempted intercepts; the object was tracked, ying

twice the speed of sound and ying at various altitudes.

Final y, at 10:06 P.M., Captain Wil iam Schaffner of the United States Air Force on detail to the 5 Squadron of the Royal Air Force took off from Binbrook to intercept the UFO. He was ying in a Lightning, tail number

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XS894. He carried two Red Top air-to-air missiles. He was told the UFO was now ying at 6,000 feet at 530 miles per hour and paral el to the coast east of Whitby.

According to the UFO researchers, he was able to intercept the object and ew alongside it. He is reported to have said the object was conical in shape with an intense blue light on it. He also said that a glass bal was ying alongside the UFO.

(Captain William Schaffner)is reported to have said the object was conical in shape with an intense blue light on it.

□e radar operators saw the blips of the interceptor and the UFO merge.

□e single blip slowed to ve hundred miles per hour, nal y hovering for two minutes. It then accelerated and the two blips separated, one accelerating to twenty thousand miles per hour while the other ew at six hundred miles per hour, descending.

Radio contact, which had been lost, was re-established with Schaffner complaining that he was dizzy and there were shooting stars. He said that his instruments were not working properly. He was told to ditch the aircra□, though he had enough fuel to return to base.

A Shackleton, a four-engine, twin-tailed, British aircra□ that was patrol ing in the area, reported that Schaffner's aircra□ was down. □e crew of the Shackleton saw it on the ocean before it sank.

While this seems to mirror the Kinross case, this is where the similarity ends. □e aircra□ was found sitting, intact, on the ocean oor. □e canopy was closed but there was no sign of the pilot. Divers were able to recover the aircra□ and it was taken to Binbrook for the accident investigation.

Everything about the investigation was classi ed then. However, in accident investigations by the U.S. Air Force, everything is always classi ed.

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It is believed that classifying the information wil facilitate the ow of

needed information. Junior officers wil feel free to express themselves if they do not believe there wil be retribution by their superiors. For the Air Force, learning what caused the accident has the highest priority.

Decades later, that information was declassi ed, and the UFO was removed from the report. According to the documentation, the UFO was, in fact, the Shackleton reconnaissance aircra□. It was part of an exercise in which Schaffner was participating that evening.

Unlike the Kinross case, there were witnesses besides the radar operators. According to the documentation in the accident report, a Lightning pilot who had completed an earlier practice intercept, and the Shackleton crew, reported they had seen Schaffner ying far below them, close to the surface of the ocean. Contact was lost with him a moment later and it is believed that it was then he hit the water.

What is interesting is that the report shows that the aircra□'s ejector seat had not been properly serviced and that it failed to re. Schaffner apparently then manual y opened the cockpit as he attempted to escape from his now

sinking aircra□. □is suggests that he was able to successful y ditch, that he was conscious, and that he had gotten out of the airplane. Once clear of the aircra□, he apparently lost his survival gear and that he succumbed to the freezing temperatures in the water. □is, of course, explains why his body was not found in the cockpit, but it doesn't completely explain what had happened to him.

It also explains why the cockpit canopy was closed. Since the ejector failed to re but was opened manual y, the canopy was not "blown clear" of the aircra□. As it sank, the hydraulics that had opened it and held it open slowly eroded and the canopy closed again.

□is, then, was a tragic accident. Schaffner did as he was told when he

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attempted to bail out of the aircra□. He successful y ditched, but when the plane sank, he was le□ in the freezing waters. In such circumstances, the pilot would have survived less than an hour and had probably lost consciousness much faster. It was an accident and not a UFO event.

Frederick Valentich, 1978

On October 21, 1978, twenty-year-old instructor pilot Frederick Valentich took off from Moorabin, Victoria, Australia, heading for King Island, Tasmania. He was ying a Cessna 182 designated as Delta Sierra Juliet, which was part of the aircra□ registration number. □e ight fol owing was with the Melbourne Flight Service Unit, and the control er there was Steve Robey.

Just a□er 7:00 P.M., Valentich contacted Melbourne and asked if there was any other traffic, or more speci cal y, was there any other aircra□ near him below ve thousand feet. Fol owing are transcripts of the official communications between Valentich and the Flight Service Unit as published by the Australian authorities:

19:06:14 DSJ [Valentich]: Melbourne, this is Delta Sierra Juliet. Is there any known traffic below ve thousand?

FS [Robey]: Delta Sierra Juliet, no known traffic.

DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, I am, seems to be a large aircra□ below ve thousand.

19:06:44 FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, what type of aircra□ is it?

DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, I cannot affirm, it is four bright, and it seems to me like landing lights.

19:07:31 DSJ: Melbourne, this is Delta Sierra Juliet, the aircra□ has just passed over me at least a thousand feet above.

DSJ: Er-unknown, due to the speed it’s travel ing, is there any air force aircra□

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in the vicinity?

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, no known aircra□ in the vicinity.

19:08:18 DSJ: Melbourne, it’s approaching now from due east towards me.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet.

19:08:41 DSJ: (open microphone for two seconds)

A bright and highly luminous UFO pursued Frederick Valentich’s Cessna 182

in 1978.

19:08:48 DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, it seems to me that he’s playing some sort of game, he’s ying over me two, three times at speeds I could not identify.

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FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, roger, what is your actual level?

DSJ: My level is four and a half thousand, four ve zero zero.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet and you con rm you cannot identify the aircra□?

DSJ: Affirmative.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, roger, stand by.

19:09:27 DSJ: Melbourne, Delta Sierra Juliet, it's not an aircra□ it is (open microphone for two seconds).

19:09:42 FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, can you describe the—er—aircra□?

DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, as it's ying past it's a long shape (open microphone for three seconds) cannot identify more than it has such speed (open microphone for three seconds). It's before me right now Melbourne.

19:10 FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, roger and how large would the—er—object be?

19:10:19 DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, Melbourne, it seems like it's chasing me. What I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me also.

It's got a green light and sort of metal ic like, it's al shiny on the outside.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet.

19:10:46 DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet (open microphone for three seconds). It's just vanished.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet.

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19:11:00 DSJ: Melbourne, would you know what kind of aircra□ I've got? Is it a military aircra□?

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, con rm the—er—aircra□ just vanished.

DSJ: Say again.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, is the aircra□ stil with you?

DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet; it's (open microphone for two seconds) now approaching from the south-west.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet.

19:11:50 DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet, the engine is rough-idling. I've got it set at twenty three twenty-four and the thing is (coughing).

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet, roger, what are your intentions?

DSJ: My intentions are—ah—to go to King Island—ah—Melbourne. □at strange aircra□ is hovering on top of me again (open microphone for two seconds). It is hovering and (open microphone for one second) it's not an aircra□.

FS: Delta Sierra Juliet.

19:12:28 DSJ: Delta Sierra Juliet. Melbourne (open microphone for seventeen seconds).

□at was the last that anyone heard from Valentich. □at last seventeen

seconds, according to some, were the sounds of metal ic scraping but no voice. A□er that just silence. When Valentich failed to arrive at King Island, other light aircra□ began a visual search of the ight route but they found nothing. Although the aircra□ was equipped with a radio survival beacon, it was not activated, or it had failed because no signal was detected from it.

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□e Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), using an Orion long-range reconnaissance aircra□, fol owed Valentich's ight route but found nothing other than an oil slick. Samples of the oil were recovered by surface vessels but turned out to be marine diesel fuel and not aviation gas. Clearly the slick was not caused by Valentich's aircra□.

Lenticular clouds have, on occasion, been mistaken for flying saucers.

A□er several days without results, the search was suspended. Although

they had found debris in the general area, it was identi ed as the remains of packing crates and plastic bags. It had nothing to do with Valentich.

Australia's Bureau of Air Safety released a report in May 1982, some three and a half years a□er Valentich vanished, saying, in essence, they real y knew nothing about it. □ey were unable to nd a location for what they identi ed as the "occurrence," they didn't know what time it had happened, even with the records available, they believed the accident was fatal, though they had found no body or wreckage,

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and they had no opinion why the aircra disappeared. In other, more precise words, they knew nothing of relevance and their investigation added nothing to the case.

Over the years there have been many explanations for this event. Bil Chalker, an Australian UFO researcher, interviewed A. Woodward, who had

signed the official Aircra Accident Summary Report. Woodward made it clear that he believed this to be an aircra accident and suggested it was possibly caused by pilot disorientation … or it was suicide … or the aircra

had been struck by a meteorite and knocked out of the sky. He didn't know and was just wildly speculating as the comment about a meteorite was suggested.

Harley Klauer, another Australian UFO researcher, had two ideas about

the case. He believed that Valentich had either been knocked down by drug runners or by an electrical discharge from a lenticular cloud. is would be, I presume, lightning.

Later he would abandon the drug smuggler theory but did say that he

had some direct evidence from a series of photographs taken at sunset on October 21. Klauer said the pictures revealed that the aircra had exploded.

e only problem was that the pictures were taken prior to Valentich's last radio transmission and an explosion would have le debris scattered over the water.

Unfortunately with something like this tragedy, there are those who come up with strange explanations. Valentich was supposedly spotted in the former Soviet Union in 1982. In documents that surfaced in 2003, a man identi ed only as Nikolay D. claimed that he had seen smoke some distance away in a remote region of the Soviet

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Union. When he and other officials approached, they found a man who Nikolay said was about forty years old.

Taken into custody, the man soon revealed that he was Frederick Valentich and that he had been captured by a UFO. He said that he was offered the chance to become a pilot of one of their (alien) cra□. He continued with other extraordinary claims which, of course, were never proved.

Valentich was also spotted at Plaza Del Charco in the Canary Islands in

1990. To prove that he was real y Valentich, he showed his Australian passport. He told those around him that he had been “recruited” by the aliens, joining a larger group of other humans also recruited by aliens. He didn’t seem to explain what they were supposed to have been recruited to do, only that it had been by aliens.

□ere were also reports, in 1982, that his aircra□ had been found. An independent lm producer, Ron Cameron (not to be confused with Jim Cameron), said that two divers had told him they had found Valentich’s aircra□ in deep water while they were on a salvage search. For ten thousand dol ars, they would provide the location of the aircra□ and other documentation to prove their story.

But nothing ever came of this. □e Australian Department of Aviation

said that they would have a role in any salvage operation because it was an open case. □ey wanted to maintain a low pro le, however, because they thought it might turn into a media circus.

At that point the divers disappeared. Maybe they feared they would be

charged with fraud if they couldn’t provide the evidence. Although Cameron tried to nd them again, they had vanished as completely as Valentich.

In the End …

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In the end, just as seen with the Kinross disappearance, there is no solution.

Maybe he ew into the ocean, maybe his aircra exploded or failed him in some other fashion, though he was in radio contact when he disappeared.

It should be noted that both Moncla and Wilson, and Valentich, disappeared over water. e lakes and oceans can hide a great deal. Searches of the area that were quickly mounted failed to provide any clues. And in the decades since, no answers have surfaced.

ese are tales of aircra disappearances that are related to UFO

sightings. Some of the documentation is more persuasive than that of others.

It can also be shown that the government, whether American or Australian, can be less than candid in their attempts to explain UFO sightings.

And, a er al is said, a hoax cannot explain the disappearance of an aircra … not in these circumstances.

Beginning about 1960, the Air Force decided they wanted to drop the

public investigations of UFOs. ere are documents that prove this.

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□eir solution, according to those documents, was to nd a university that would study the question of UFOs, determine that national security was not an issue, and then recommend that the Air Force no longer investigate them.

□e outcome of this was the University of Colorado study, popularly known as the Condon Committee.

Air Force Loses Interest

Contrary to what the Air Force might claim, what the news media might report, and what most people might believe, by 1960 the Air Force was no longer interested in the investigation of UFOs. □ey found themselves in a position they did not like. By regulation and expectation, they had to investigate UFO sightings, but they had long ago determined that UFOs did not pose a threat to national security and their continuing investigation presented them nothing more than a public relations nightmare. No matter what they said, no matter how they spun the information, no matter how

many cases they solved, the public continued to believe they were hiding information about alien visitation.

In fact, a□er the Level and, Texas, sightings of November, 1957, Richard Horner, then an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, in a broadcast, said,

“□e Air Force is not hiding any UFO information. And I do not qualify this in any way.”

But documents circulated internal y by the Air Force proved that this was not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Project Blue Book, while known to the public, gathered information and then classi ed it routinely as “secret.” □at is, in fact, hiding information because those without a security clearance, and a need to know, would not have access to it. Horner knew this when he made the statement, but then, he was attempting to protect the project and the research being conducted and wasn’t worried about what might be

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learned about the project and classi cations at some future date. He wasn't worried about the accuracy of what he said other than it was basical y accurate.

While this hinted at an attempt to derail the UFO investigations, other

documents that surfaced a□er the Project Blue Book les were made public in 1976 suggested that the Air Force wanted everything explained. In December, 1958, an officer assigned to the UFO project said that he had found "certain de ciencies" that he believed "must be corrected." He was referring to Air Force Regulation 2002 that had been revised on 5 February 1958, which ordered the fol owing, " … to explain or identify al UFO

sightings."

Lonnie Zamora.

Essential y, the Air Force was ordering its officers to investigate UFO

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sightings and then explain them. If the sighting was of some mundane object, then that explanation was offered immediately. If it wasn't easily identi ed, then possible explanations were to be accepted as the real thing and those should be offered to the public.

A□er the sightings of the mid-1960s, which included the Lonnie Zamora

landing trace case from Socorro, New Mexico, the Air Force embarked on a search for a university or some other "neutral" entity that could investigate UFOs to provide a scienti c framework for the evidence. While they suggested they wanted an independent study, the documentation made it clear that what they real y wanted was someone to study the questions and then nd the answers the Air Force desired.

□is, then, was the study undertaken by the University of Colorado with

a half a mil ion dol ars of taxpayer money. Chosen to lead the investigation was Dr. Edward Condon, a wel -respected scientist, according to some of the advanced publicity for the study.

□is seems an odd choice, at rst, given his entire background. He was a scientist who favored the free exchange of ideas, theories, and information inside the scienti c community, even with col eagues in the Soviet bloc. He had worked on the Manhattan Project, but only for weeks, quitting over what he believed to be overzealous enforcement of the security regulations.

He was given security clearances and had them revoked a number of times.

He worked in government, worked in private industry, and had taught at the university level.

"It is my inclination right now to recommend that the government get

out of this business."

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□ere is nothing in his background to suggest that he was disloyal or that he would have shared secrets with those not authorized to have them if he was entrusted with them. It didn't seem to matter if the secrets were government or industrial. He chaffed at having the information restricted to a few but he didn't seem to have shared anything that he had learned during those periods. His record was cleared a number of times, but in the end government bureaucracy overcame good sense and decency and his

clearances were nal y revoked.

So, that the Air Force would select him to lead their UFO investigation

seems strange. □e Air Force said that it was his lack of a stated policy or opinion on the subject that led to his selection. But then, some eighteen months before the nal report was due, with the investigation stil underway, Condon told scientists in Corning, New York, on January 26, 1967, "It is my inclination right now to recommend that the government get out of this business. My attitude right now is that there is nothing in it. But I am not supposed to reach a conclusion for another year."

But the case for conclusions existing before any work was done by the

scientists on the Condon Committee, as it became known, is much stronger than a simple statement made in front of col eagues who might wonder about his involvement with ying saucers. On January 16, 1967, before the real work began and ten days before Condon would tel his Corning audience his opinion, Lieutenant Colonel Robert R. Hippler of the Science

Division, Directorate of Science and Technology, part of the HQ, USAF in Washington, D.C., wrote to Dr. Edward U. Condon. □e letter was received

by the committee on January 23.

Hippler wrote:

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□is is an informal letter expressing some thoughts on our roundtable discussion on the UFO program, and does not constitute the formal letter requested by John Coleman.

□ere are two items which leave me a little uneasy. □e rst is the Wertheimer Hypothesis, and its corol ary that one cannot “prove” the negative on extraterrestrial visitations. □e second is an apparently obscure understanding of what the Air Force wants. Since I wil discuss this second item, you wil see why this is an informal letter expressing my own opinion—and hence is not binding on you.

On the rst item, I wish to present a slightly different approach. When we rst took over the UFO program, the rst order of business, even before approaching AFOSR, was to assure ourselves that the situation was as straightforward as logic indicated it should be. In other words, we too looked to see if by some chance the intel igence people have information other than what exists in Blue Book les. □ere were no surprises. While there exist some things which may forever remain unknowable in the universe, certainly an extraterrestrial visitation must fal in the “knowable” category. An alien would not come light years merely to pick up surreptitiously some rocks, or melt holes in reservoir ice (a la Edwards). He would have long since gone through the geologic bit, and would be fairly knowledgeable of the make-up of stars and planets. You have stated that President Truman was unaware of the Manhattan Project until he became President. In that same time period, physicists not connected with the project were aware of the possibilities and knew that something was going on.

No one knows of a visitation. It should therefore fol ow there has been no visitation to date. As you are aware, if UFOs are an Air Force “sacred cow,” the other services in the usual competitive spirit would not be constrained by this

“sacred cow.” Nor is the “fear of panic” holding anyone’s tongue. No one is reticent about the horror of an ICBM attack. Words such as “end of civilization” have been used many times.

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□is brings us to the second item. When you have looked into some sightings and examined some Blue Book records and become acquainted with the true

state of affairs, you must consider the cost of the Air Force program on UFOs, and determine if the taxpayer should support this for the next decade. It wil

be at least that long before another independent study can be mounted to see if the Air Force can get out from under this program. If the contract is up before you have laid the proper groundwork for a proper recommendation, an extension of the contract would be less costly than another decade of operating Project Blue Book.

Hippler signed his name.

In his response, which is not reproduced in its entirety simply because

some of the things said, “Yes, you’re right,” Robert Low wrote:

Maybe we wil nd that extraterrestrial visitations have occurred, but there’s no way to demonstrate that they haven’t. □is is a logical problem that can’t be skirted, and I’m sure, if we were to miss the point, the National Academy would set us straight….

We don’t know what technology exists on other planets. I think one can assert, however, that for a spaceship to get to the earth from a planet outside the solar system, it would be necessary to employ a technology far more advanced than we enjoy. Since we have no knowledge of that technology, speculation on it brings one right into science ction, and once one has crossed that boundary the sky is the limit. He can argue anything, and the rules of scienti c evidence and methodology have been abandoned. So there is no point in stepping across the boundary, except to engage in idle speculation! Such speculation isn’t useful in helping to close in on an answer to the problem of whether there have been extraterrestrial visitors or not. And probability won’t help.

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You mention that the fear of panic is not holding anyone's tongue. □at's an extremely good point; I had not thought of it. On the second page, you indicate what you believe the Air Force wants of us, and I am very glad to have your opinion. In fact, you have answered quite directly the question that I have asked—you may remember that I came back to it a couple of times—at our meeting on □ursday evening, January 12.

Low then signed off, a□er suggesting that he and Condon would be in

Washington, D.C., and they could "perhaps" get together.

□e language in both Hippler's and Low's letters can be seen as benign,

but it can also suggest an attempt by Hippler to tel Low what they were to nd and what recommendation the Air Force wanted. End the study of UFOs by the Air Force. Get the Air Force off the hook for UFO

investigations. Suggest that National Security was not an issue, and let that be the end of it.

Al of this was part of the original plan as discussed on January 12, 1967, in what was cal ed "Air Force Advisory Panel Brie ng," that included Hippler, Major Hector Quintanil a who ran Project Blue Book at the time, and a number of civilian scientists who held various positions with the Air Force, including John W. Evans, Myron B. Gilbert, John Howard, and Kenneth E. Kissel .

□e meeting was cal ed to gure out just how they were going to proceed

with the investigation of UFOs. In fact, at the onset, Condon said, "At this meeting we would like to discuss our progress and future plans with you, and especial y we hope to bene t from your opinions on where the emphasis should be placed with respect to policy questions the Study must deal with."

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Condon then noted that one of the problems was going to be eld investigations. He said that he knew of no problem in physics in which the data were obtained by interviewing the citizens. He said that nearly al a physicists' research was done in the laboratory and the problem they faced was the transitory nature of UFO sightings. e appearance of the UFO

could not be predicted and the sightings were relatively short-lived so that one of their investigators would have no chance of getting there to make independent observations and measurements.

Arrey, New Mexico, April 24, 1949

While it is true that sightings can't be taken into the lab for study, it is also true that scientists have been involved in UFO sightings themselves. Charles B. Moore, of Project Mogul fame, had his own UFO sighting on April 24,

1949, near the White Sands Proving Ground which is near Arrey, New Mexico. It is a report that is stil classi ed as "Unidenti ed" in the Project Blue Book les, and is one that the Condon Committee should have reviewed as part of their study. It had multiple witnesses that included a scientist and involved instrumentation in the observation. In other words, here was a scienti c observation of a UFO.

According to the documentation, Moore, who was working with

General Mil s and had manufactured the bal oon they were using in their

research, along with a crew of four Navy-enlisted men, had set up their equipment to record local weather data to prepare for a Skyhook bal oon launch. ey were near Arrey, and had "released a 350 gram bal oon about

1020 MST and were fol owing it with a standard ML-47 David White

eodolite."

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Moore had made a reading at 1030 and then gave up the theodolite to

watch the bal oon with his unaided eyes. Moore said:

We thought we had the bal oon when we picked up a whitish spherical object right along the direction the theodolite was pointing. □e object was dri□ing east rapidly but we had thought to encounter similar winds on the bal oon.

When the distance between the theodolite and the supposed bal oon became apparent, I took over the theodolite and found the true bal oon stil there, whereupon I abandoned it and picked up the object a□er it came out of the sun…. □e object was moving too fast to crank the theodolite around; therefore one of the men pointed to the theodolite and I looked. □e object was el ipsoid about 2 to 1 slimness ratio; length about .02’ subtended angle.

White in color except for a light yel ow of one side as though it were in shadow.

I could not get a hard focus on the object due to the speed at which the angles changed. □erefore I saw no good detail at al .

□e azimuth angle continued to decrease as the object continued on a north heading, growing smal er in size…. □e object then disappeared due to

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distance a□er a total time of observation of about sixty seconds. □e object was not a bal oon and was some distance away.

Donald Menzel believed that he could identify the object. Menzel, a□er

talking to Moore, said that he knew what Moore and his crew had seen.

Menzel said that it was not an object but a mirage, an atmospheric re ection of the real bal oon, making it seem there were two objects in the sky when there was but one. He told Moore about it.

But Moore, who described himself as an atmospheric physicist, and who

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considered himself quali ed to discuss this with Menzel as a peer rather than as a layman, said that the weather conditions were not right for the creation of a mirage. Since Moore was on the scene and Menzel was safely ensconced in his classroom in far-away Massachusetts, Moore's opinion carried more weight. When Moore talked with Menzel, Menzel didn't want

to listen to what Moore had to day. □e Air Force sided with Moore and marked the case as "unidenti ed."

Edward Condon, a highly respected physicist who also once headed the National Bureau of Standards, led the committee that bears his name in

debunking UFO reports.

In August 1949, the information about the case leaked into the press.

One of the officers who was at White Sands that month mentioned the ying saucer sightings that had been made there. Articles were published in various newspapers, including those in El Paso, Texas, and Los Angeles, California, saying that there were ying saucer reports happening at military bases in New Mexico.

□e main article, written by Marvin Miles of the Los Angeles Times and

published on August 30, 1949, said, "Flying saucers or at least mysterious ying 'objects' have been sighted by service personnel at this vital [White Sands Proving Ground] center of America's upper air research."

According to Miles, "One officer believes, sincerely, that the objects seen are space ships and declared that a bal istic formula applied to one observation through a photo theodolite showed the 'ship' was 35 to 40 miles high, an eggshaped cra□ of fantastic size and traveling at incredible speeds of three to four miles a second!"

□at officer was probably Commander Douglas C. McLaughlin, a

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regular (as opposed to Reserve) Navy officer. McLaughlin said that “objects had been sighted at least six times,” and that two of the objects, or discs, had own along a V-2 rocket.

In the March 1950 issue of True, McLaughlin went into greater detail. He wrote:

Shortly a□er the bal oon was alo□, west of the observation point, the theodolite operator swung his instrument rapidly to the east.

A strange object, seen by everyone present, had crossed the path of the bal oon. □e instrument man, confused, had fol owed it. Swi□ly, one of the scientists [Moore] grabbed the theodolite and began tracking the missile.

An accurate plot of the object’s course was recorded. Analyzing this data later, I

[meaning McLaughlin] can state de nitely that:

1. □e object, viewed in cross section, was el iptical in shape.

2. It was about 105 feet in diameter.

3. It was ying at an altitude of approximately 56 miles. (□is was determined by a bal istics expert. An object at a lower altitude on this particular bright day could not have tted the data taken. For security reasons, I cannot go deeper into this method of calculating altitude [though it seems that the object would have been extremely difficult to see that high above the ground].)

4. Its speed was about 5 miles per second.

5. At the end of its trajectory, it swerved abruptly upward, altering its angle of elevation by 5 degrees—corresponding to an increase of altitude of about 25

miles—in a period of 10 seconds. A rough calculation indicates that a force of more than 20 G’s (20 times the pul of gravity) would be

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required to produce this elevation in this time.

6. □e object was visible for 60 seconds.

7. It disappeared at an elevation of 29 degrees.

Miles, in his original article, concluded, “In al , some ve reports have been made in the last six months.” He said his source for this was an unnamed officer and that this officer mentioned other officers who had reported seeing UFOs.

Since al the information, in 1949, was classi ed, and because it seemed that classi ed information had leaked, the Air Force Office of Special Investigation was cal ed in. A number of agents from the AFOSI District Office #17 at Kirkland Air Force Base in Albuquerque conducted the investigation. □is investigation, however, concentrated on the possible compromise of classi ed information and not on the sightings themselves.

What was learned was that there had been other sightings at White Sands, and Moore might have known about them, but never said a word if

he did.

□is investigation … concentrated on the possible compromise of

classified information and not on the sightings themselves.

But the real point here is that the Condon Committee had been lamenting the fact that UFOs weren’t brought into the lab, couldn’t be brought into the lab, the sightings were relegated to civilians without scienti c training, and that the reports were usual y brief.

Information picked up in the Project Blue Book les showed that there had been sightings from Los Alamos on May 3, June 2, 11, and 20. Al were identi ed as mundane objects, mostly meteors. It would seem that scientists would be able to recognize meteors when they saw

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them. But if nothing else, here was a series of mundane sightings that the Condon Committee could

have used to develop information about the psychological reactions of those who saw UFOs and learn something about their inability to identify meteors.

Back to the January Brie ng

Condon then said, “From there [meaning the transitory nature of the sighting] I don’t necessarily draw the conclusion that one should not make the effort. One or two good eld incidents which we ourselves can observe with a camera or spectrograph or radiometer under our own control would

be very good evidence. When one considers what is implied in attempting to do this, however, the feasibility is considerably reduced.”

But then, in October of 1968, there was a sighting which would have al owed the time for a team to get to the location, they would have had the opportunity to interview many rsthand witnesses, they would have been given a photograph of the object in the air, and because the event took place over several days, they could have made their own observations of some of the residue from the case.

□e Lack of Investigation—Shag Harbour

As it turns out, the Condon Committee didn’t want to do much in the way

of eldwork. □is is demonstrated by the Shag Harbour UFO crash in October 1967. Although the Condon Committee had been commissioned to

review the UFO evidence, and although they had received a report that something had crashed into Shag Harbour, Nova Scotia, their entire investigation of the incident was a telephone cal or two to the

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Royal Canadian Mounted Police. □ey were alerted to the event by Jim Lorenzen,

then the International Director of APRO. Given that information, they launched their “investigation” using the telephone.

Dr. Norman E. Levine provided the information for the Condon

Committee and it was reported on page 351 and 352 as Case No. 34, labeled as North Atlantic and dated as Fal 1967. Levine wrote:

He [Jim Lorenzen] stated that the original report had come from two teenagers and that the Navy was searching for wreckage. No aircra□ were reported missing in the area…. A corporal of the RCMP [apparently Victor Werbicki]

stated that the rst report had come from ve young people, 15–20 yr. old, who while driving near the shore had seen three or four yel ow lights in a horizontal pattern comparable in size to a ‘fair-sized’ aircra□…. □ey observed the light while they drove about .25 mi., then reported the incident to the RCMP detachment.

Chris Styles and Don Ledger, two Canadian researchers who have

between them decades of experience in UFO investigations, provided me with a thick le on the case. Just a quick reading of that information certainly suggested that something quite unusual had happened. According to them, the events began on the night of October 4, 1967, near the smal shing vil age of Shag Harbour. Something, estimated to be about sixty feet in diameter, descended to the surface of the water about a half mile from shore. On it were four bright lights that ashed in sequence.

Newpaper articles, one of them published in the Halifax Herald, reported that Laurie Wickens, with four others, spotted something above and in front of them at about 11:00 P.M. that night. It was a large object that

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had four ashing amber-colored lights; the object was descending, as opposed to fal ing, toward the harbor.

As it struck the water, there seemed to be a bright ash and explosion.

Wickens decided to contact the police and drove through one vil age and into another trying to keep the object in sight so that he could provide precise information. □ey entered the parking lot of the Irish Moss Plant. Al ve of them, Wickens included, ran to the water's edge when they could see what they would later describe as a dark object oating or hovering just about the water. Now the ashing lights were gone and only a single, pale yel ow light that seemed to be on top of the object could be seen.

Wickens decided that he would report the sighting to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, but rather than driving back to the detachment

outpost, he would drive west to Wood's Harbour in search of a telephone.

□ere he contacted Corporal Victor Werbicki, who wasn't very impressed with the report. Instead of asking him anything about the crash, Werbicki asked him if he had been drinking. Werbicki then told Wickens to hang up but to wait by the telephone.

As it struck the water, there seemed to be a bright flash and explosion.

Several other witnesses, some of them thinking that some sort of aircra□

had crashed, cal ed the same RCMP detachment at Barrington Passage.

Mary Banks, who was on Maggie Garron's Point, which is near the harbor,

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told Werbicki that she had seen an airplane crash into the sound. A third cal came in from two women who were about thirteen miles away and who had

seen the same thing. A man, in a fourth cal , said that he had also heard a whistle and a bang. Although they al talked in terms of an aircra accident and others mentioned only bright ashing lights, no one suggested that this was a UFO, meaning alien cra.

It was now apparent to Werbicki that something had happened out there. He cal ed Wickens back and told him to meet him at the Moss plant.

ree of RCMP officers made it to the shoreline and one of them, Constable Ron Pond, said that he had seen the lights from his car and that he'd seen the

object, or the lights, or whatever, dive toward the water. He thought he saw a shape behind the lights which certainly changed the dynamic of the sighting. In other words, Pond saw not only the lights, but believed those lights had been attached to something solid.

Standing on the shore with the Mounties were a number of other witnesses. ese included Wickens and his four friends, and the occupants of a pickup truck that pul ed into the lot. Norm and Wilfred Smith had seen the object in the air before stopping for a better look. Although Werbicki didn't see anything until Wickens pointed it out to him, al could see the pale yel ow light that oated about a half mile from shore. rough binoculars, they could see that whatever oated on the surface was creating a foaming, yel ow wake as it moved. Because the object was in the water offshore, the Coast Guard was noti ed and shing boats were cal ed in to look around.

Although the cause of the yel ow foam disappeared before the boats arrived, they could stil see some evidence of its passing. e Coast Guard cutter arrived too late to see anything and by three in the morning the search was suspended but would resume the next day.

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□is is the situation as it stood when Jim Lorenzen noti ed the members

of the Condon Committee. Levine, in his preliminary statement, suggests that the rst reports were made by teenagers and he seems to be suggesting that others saw lights on the water, but nothing in the sky. Levine went on to write:

Two officers [RCMP constables Ron O'Brien and Ron Pond] and the corporal

[Werbicki] had arrived about 15 min. later, in time to see the light on the water. It persisted about ve minutes longer. Ten minutes a□er it went out the two officers were at the site in a rowboat; a Coast Guard boat and six shing boats were on the scene.

□ey found only patches of foam 30–40 yd. wide that the shermen thought

was not normal tide foam….

□e site of the presumed impact was in between an island and the mainland, about 200–300 yd. off shore. Apparently, no one actual y saw anything enter the water [though I must point out that a number of people saw the object descend to the water, which is, essential y, the same thing]. However two young women driving on the island reported that a horizontal pattern of three yel ow lights had tilted and descended, and then a yel ow light had appeared….

□e RCMP corporal stated that the light on the water was not on any boat, that Air Search and Rescue had no reports of missing aircra□ in the area, and an RCAF radar station nearby reported no Canadian or U.S. air operations in the area at the time, nor any ususal radar object…. A search by Navy divers during the days immediately fol owing the sighting disclosed nothing relevant.

Five days later the Naval Maritime Command advised the project [that is, the Condon Committee] that the search had been terminated. □e watch officer

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read a report from the RCMP indicating that at the time in question a 60 □.

object had been seen to explode upon impact with the water…. A captain of a shing boat that had been about 16 mi. from the site of the earlier reports, reported to the project that he and his crew had seen three stationary bright red ashing lights on the water, from sundown until about 11 P.M. □e ship's radar showed four objects forming a six mile square; the three lights were associated with one of these objects [so now we see that Levine is contradicting himself with radar reports and people seeing the object descend]. At about 11:00 P.M., one of the lights went straight up. □e captain had judged that the radar objects were naval vessels and the ascending light a helicopter; he had attached no signi cance to these observations until he had heard on the radio of the sightings; he then reported the foregoing observations…. However, since the position he reported for the objects was about 175 n. mi. from the original site, the two situations do not appear related.

No further investigation by the project was considered justi able particularly in view of the immediate and thorough search [that had failed to nd anything which would suggest that the Condon Committee should be interested in the case] that had been carried out by the RCMP and the Maritime Command.

□is shows that the on-the-scene investigation by the Condon

Committee was a telephone cal and then a dismissal of the case. □is was a case of multiple witnesses, certainly more than just the teenagers that Levine mentioned, and there was a possibility of physical evidence, but they declined go to Canada. Levine seemed to believe, or at the very least claimed he believed, that the sightings had been thoroughly investigated by others on the scene, that nothing of interest was found, and that the search had been cal ed off.

Years later, an investigation by Canadian researchers Chris Styles and Don Ledger uncovered not only additional witnesses, a

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photograph of the

object in the sky, but also documentation and testimony from high-ranking Canadian officials. Styles, in writing about the case, would say that he had

met with a former general who had served with the DOPS section of the Canadian Forces Headquarters. □e officer was annoyed with Styles for nding him but did supply some interesting information about the case.

(A)n investigation by Canadian researchers Chris Styles and Don

Ledger uncovered not only additional witnesses, a photograph of the object in the sky, but also documentation and testimony from high-ranking Canadian officials.

According to Styles:

□e story told to me in Ottawa by the Brigadier contained al the veri able bits and earlier partial stories of ships sitting over a submerged U.F.O. off C.F.S.

Shelburne's government point. □e Brigadier's source was [sic] men who were loyal to him that were commandeered by NORAD and the navy to play the

role of identi cation team if they found something physical. Apparently, they did and according to the Brigadier the men claim that '□ere was no doubt.' It was not a conventional aircra□ or spacejunk [sic] originating from either 1967

superpower. □ey told their regular Canadian C.O. that '□ere was activity down there.' In fact incredibly they say that there was a second cra□. In the Brigadier's own lingo, 'It was standing nines for the damaged saucer.' □e basic outline of the story ends when a russian [sic] sub enters the then 12 mile offshore international limit. □e smal otil a sails toward the intruder to offer chal enge. □is is a□er a weeks [sic] observation by sonar and T.V. remote over the U.F.O.'s

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resting place. It is at this point that both U.F.O.’s [sic] begin moving under the water back towards the Shag Harbour area. Once they clear open water in the Gulf of Maine they surface and y away. □e Brigadier closed our meeting by stating that he doubts I wil nd any paperwork on this operation in Canada.

□at Styles and Ledger were able to uncover the documentation and testimony from the event suggests that this was something that the Condon Committee should have done as wel . It happened on their watch, would have provided them with a very interesting case that hinted at the extraterrestrial, and met the criterion for an investigation with the exception of it happening in Canada. Even with that problem, there were American military forces involved, and the scientists could have arrived before the conclusion of the incident, but they were content to ignore it as a prank by teenagers.

Continued Notes from the January 12, 1967, Meeting

□ere were some other interesting, if not disturbing, aspects of that meeting.

□ey discussed the crop of UFO sighting reports that had been gathered, concentrating on the Air Force but not ignoring the civilian organizations.

What was said was, “Brie y, he [Michael Wertheimer from the Department

of Psychology] has hypothesized that regardless of how many reports we received and how many we are able to dispose of, we are almost certain to nd a residue of unexplained ones. □e existence of the residue, however, does not prove that anything is coming from outer space. To prove that, one needs direct evidence that some objects are real y from outer space and that they are intel igently guided; the existence of a residue of unexplained sighting reports does not constitute such proof.”

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Condon, at some point, said that he would accept as evidence of an alien visitation the recovery of a spaceship. He said, “I wouldn’t be satis ed with anything other than actual y getting a vehicle, with or without occupants, so under my control that I could take it and exhibit it to something like this committee so that al of you saw it, or take you to a place where I had it

‘captured.’ Anything less than that I wouldn’t believe.”

Observation, then, even by those who were trained, and the committee

had suggested pilots, both military and commercial, as trained observers, and by scientists, would not be sufficient. □ey didn’t discuss the indirect evidence as being sufficient, even if that evidence was supported by multiple-witness observation. Landing traces, radar returns, photographs, and other measurements wouldn’t build a sufficiently strong case to convince Condon that there was alien visitation, which in and of itself isn’t as disturbing as some of the other things that Condon said.

Wertheimer, in a long section, discussed reaction to various types of stimuli and then said, “Unfortunately, I think it is becoming clear that the fundamental question that the public wants answered is simply

unanswerable. □e assertion that at least some of these are actual y caused by objects of intel igent extraterrestrial origin is neither proof nor disproof, nor made less likely by the existence of cases in the X class [meaning those

cases that have no suitable explanation, or in other words, the ‘unidenti eds’

in the Project Blue Book les].”

Wertheimer was suggesting at this point that they had no hope of learning if UFOs were extraterrestrial in nature. He believed that they couldn’t possibly come to any sort of conclusion about this, which is,

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what the public expected and what it was suggested this scienti c study would do.

Scientists would review the data and the evidence, investigate new cases, and in the end come to some sort of a conclusion.

But as noted, in reality, al they were supposed to do was say something positive about the way the Air Force had handled the UFO investigations and say they did not threaten national security. Wertheimer, in fact, said during the meeting, “Here is an excerpt from a memorandum I sent to the

UFO Study:

I think the Blue Book attempts have been superb—that the Blue Book personnel are badly overworked, that considering the smal amount of time and staff available they have done a superb job. Chances are that a substantial proportion of the cases, though, that are now explained in the les would on closer examination not be very convincing a□er al . □ere are probably some also which are now unexplained which more careful analysis might nd a fairly plausible explanation for. But I am also convinced that, however, much time we or any other group spend studying these detailed reports, there wil stil remain some that are unsatisfactorily explained.

In other words, the Blue Book team had done a good job with the little

support and resources they had available to them. And, if better information had been provided original y, then some of the unidenti ed cases might be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone.

Condon’s Change in Tone

“Air Force officers (concluded) … that none of the things seen, or thought to have been seen, which pass by the name UFO reports constituted any hazard or threat to national security.”

At the beginning of the “investigation” Condon seemed to be having some

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fun with UFOs. He attended UFO conventions, and interviewed and had his

picture taken with some of the more outrageous characters to dot the ufological eld. But this attitude began to slowly change, as if he had begun to fear UFOs. □e general theme of the discussions, a□er the summer of 1967, was that UFOs were harmful. Not that seeing them was harmful, or

getting close to them was harmful, but the idea they might be of extraterrestrial origin was harmful to children.

In the summary of the report that would be published in 1969, Condon

wrote, “We strongly recommend that teachers refrain from giving students credit for school work based on their reading of the presently available UFO

books and magazine articles. Teachers who nd their students strongly motivated in this direction should attempt to channel their interests in the direction of the serious study of astronomy and meteorology, and critical analysis of arguments for the fantastic propositions that are being supported by appeals to fal acious reasoning or false data.”

In 1969, the committee released its ndings. □ey found, as had al the

previous official and, supposedly, unbiased investigations, that UFOs posed no threat to national security. Condon wrote, in the “Section I, Recommendations and Conclusions” that “the history of the past 21 years

has repeatedly led Air Force officers to the conclusion that none of the things seen, or thought to have been seen, which pass by the name UFO

reports constituted any hazard or threat to national security.”

A□er suggesting that such a nding was “out of our province” to study

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and that the committee members would pass any such evidence on to the

Air Force, Condon wrote, “We know of no reason to question the nding of

the Air Force that the whole class of UFO reports so far considered does not pose a defense problem.”

Condon went on and wrote in the recommendations that “it is our impression that the defense function could be performed within the framework established for intel igence and surveil ance operations without the continuance of a special unit such as Project Blue Book, but this is a question for defense specialists rather than research scientists.”

With that, Condon had taken care of most of the requirements of the study. He had said some positive things about the way the investigation had been conducted, he had determined that it was not a national security issue, and he had recommended the closing of Project Blue Book because other

military organizations could perform the investigative functions without having a dedicated project.

But to make sure the general public was not fooled by the UFO

researchers or the writers of popular literature, Condon wrote, “It has been contended that the subject has been shrouded in official secrecy. We conclude otherwise. We have no evidence of secrecy concerning UFO

reports. What has been miscal ed secrecy has been no more than an intel igent policy of delay in releasing data so that the public does not become confused by premature publication of incomplete studies or reports.”

□e Bolender Memo (Again, Brie y)

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Although Condon seemed to believe that there was no secrecy involved in

UFO investigation, other than for the time it took for the Air Force to properly research a case, documentation proved this wrong. He'd already seen a stack of Project Blue Book les that were marked "secret" long a□er any investigation had been completed and the solutions found. He might have been privy to other documents contained in the Blue Book les including a long list of studies, papers, and brie ngs that, in 1969, were stil marked as "secret" even though they had been made, written, and briefed a decade or more earlier.

And, in 1969, Air Force Brigadier General C. H. Bolender wrote,

"Moreover, reports of unidenti ed ying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with JANAP (Joint Army, Navy, Air Force

Publication) or Air Force Manual 55 11 and are not part of the Blue Book system."

And then Air Force Regulation 200-2, which guided the investigations of

UFOs by the Air Force, made it clear that reports of UFOs were to be investigated by the 4602d AISS (Air Intel igence Service Squadron) a□er 1953 rather than being sent directly to Project Blue Book. (□is was a□er the Robertson Panel study, which had also been classi ed, and in 1969 had only been released in a limited way.) □e regulation ordered, "For those objects which are not explainable, only the fact that ATIC wil analyze them is worthy of release, due to the many unknowns involved."

Or, in other words, the reports were to be made to various military organizations, but that information was to remain with those organizations and would not be released into the civilian world. □is was the secrecy that Condon had failed to nd.

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□is al seems to lead to the conclusion that the Condon Committee was

not an unbiased investigation of UFOs, but a careful y designed study to prove that UFOs were not worthy of study and to discourage research. □at they were reaching for solutions is proved by the study itself.

Labrador, 30 June, 1954

According to the rsthand account of a commercial airline pilot as printed in the Condon document:

I was in command of a BOAC Boeing Strato cruiser en route from New York

to London via Goose Bay Labrador (refuel ing [sic] stop). Soon a□er crossing overhead Seven Islands at 19,000 feet, True Airspeed 230 kts, both my co-pilot and I became aware of something moving along off our port beam at a lower altitude at a distance of maybe ve miles, in and out of a broken layer of Strato Cumulus cloud. As we watched, these objects climbed above the cloud and we could see one large and six smal . As we ew on towards Goose Bay the large object began to change shape and the smal er to move relative to the larger….

We informed Goose Bay that we had something odd in sight and they made

arrangements to vector a ghter (F-94?) on to us. Later I changed radio frequency to contact this ghter; the pilot told me he had me in sight on radar closing me head-on at 20 miles. At that the smal objects seemed to enter the larger, and then the big one shrank. I gave a description of this to the ghter and a bearing of the objects from me. I then had to change back to Goose frequency for descent clearance. I don’t know if the ghter saw anything, as he hadn’t landed when I le□ Goose for London.

□e description in the nal report of the Condon Committee noted that

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the UFO was “an opaque, dark ‘jel y– sh–like’ object, constantly changing shape,” which to them was suggestive of “an optical cause.” But they noted that very little meteorological data are available for that date and that “the presence of signi cant optical propagation mechanisms can be neither con rmed nor ruled out. Nevertheless, certain facts in the case are strongly suggestive of an optical mirage phenomenon…. “

(T)he Condon Committee noted that the UFO was “an opaque, dark

‘jelly-fish-like’ object, constantly changing shape,” …

But the argument for some kind of mirage, or against it, is not what is

important in this speci c example. It is clear from the back and forth, that is, a mirage, not mirage arguments by the committee members, le□ them with

no real answer for the case. And that there seems to be no report from the

ghter pilot is also signi cant. His observations would certainly have provided weight to one explanation or another because he would have seen the UFO from another perspective.

In the end, the Condon Committee did solve the case, at least to their

satisfaction. On page 140 of the Bantam paperback of □e Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects, the author of the Goose Bay report wrote, “□is unusual sighting should therefore be assigned to the category of some almost certainly natural phenomenon, which is so rare that it apparently has never been reported before or since.”

□e End of Blue Book

Condon did the job he had been hired to do. He attempted to bury the questions about UFOs under a blanket of scienti c jargon, biased and incomplete investigations, and supposed objectivity. □e nal report was structured the way Condon wanted it structured and the case

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book that was supposed to accompany the report was scrapped because it might have led

to embarrassing questions.

□e other thing that Condon did that was deceptive was produce an

“executive summary.” □is was a short volume that supposedly included al

the relevant information from the much thicker formal report. □e problem is that the executive summary, which is about al the members of the news media and that many of the scientists outside the committee read, is not accurate. While Condon is suggesting that he had nal y put the idea of UFOs as alien cra□ to rest, the statistics in his main report do not con rm that.

None of that makes any difference because today this report is held up as an example of scienti c research into UFOs. To skeptics and debunkers, it proves there is nothing to the theory that some UFOs represent alien spacecra□ and alien technology. □e report accomplished its mission because, on December 17, 1969, the Air Force announced the closing of Project Blue Book. Investigating UFOs would be le□ to local law enforcement or civilian UFO groups. □e Air Force was no longer interested….

Or so they said.

Project Moon Dust

For nearly □een years a□er the Condon Committee made their

recommendations and the Air Force announced the termination of Blue Book, there was no hint that any U.S. agency was involved in UFO research.

If a civilian cal ed an Air Force base to report a ying saucer, he or she was told that if they felt threatened to cal a local law enforcement establishment.

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Some of those law enforcement agencies had the telephone numbers of UFO

researchers and that citizen would be passed on to them. It seemed that no one in authority had any real desire to investigate UFO sightings. □ere was simply nothing to them.

But that wasn't quite the situation as it existed inside the government.

□ere were provisions for gathering and investigating UFO data. A secret project, which had a classi ed code name and an investigative responsibility, existed. According to documents released, accidental y, under the Freedom of Information Act, it was suggested that this was Project Moon Dust.

Robert Todd, a UFO researcher and what some might have cal ed a rabid

skeptic, using Freedom of Information, led dozens, maybe hundreds, of requests for UFO information. He didn't just target the Air Force, but fol owed leads into other government departments, including the

Department of State. In what some suggest was a mistake, he received a number of micro che that contained the code name "Project Moon Dust."

□ese suggested that the gathering of UFO material from around the world

had continued, though other government organizations suggested

otherwise.

Clifford Stone, a researcher living in Roswel , New Mexico, decided to

fol ow the path that had been discovered by Todd, and requested his own

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copies of the documents contained on the micro che with similar results.

He learned not only of Moon Dust, but of Operation Blue Fly, which seemed to be the logistical support for the Moon Dust teams.

Stone, in fact, supplied me with a document that seemed to outline al of this. According to that document, dated 3 November 1961, the purpose is

“to provide quali ed personnel to AFCIN intel igence teams.” □ere is a

deleted segment and then in paragraph 2, subsection C, it said, “In addition to their staff duty assignments, intel igence team personnel have peacetime duty functions in support of such Air Force Projects as Moon Dust, Blue Fly, and UFO, and other AFCIN directed quick reaction projects which require

intel igence team operational capabilities (see De nitions).”

Under “De nitions,” it said:

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e. Unidenti ed Flying Objects (UFO): Headquarters USAF has established a program for investigation of reliably reported unidenti ed ying objects within the United States. AFR 200-2 delineates 1127th col ection responsibilities.

f. Blue Fly: Operation Blue Fly has been established to facilitate expeditious delivery to FTD of Moon Dust or other items of great technological intel igence interest. AFCIN SOP for Blue Fly Operations, February 1960, provides for the 1127th participation.

g. Moon Dust: As a specialized aspect of its over-al material exploitation program, Headquarters USAF has established Project Moon Dust to locate, recover and deliver descended foreign space vehicles. ICGL #4, 25 April 1961, delineates col ection responsibilities.

People who see UFOs are now supposed to contact law enforcement, not the FBI or military.

What makes this document important is that it spel s out the col ection of UFO-related materials, but it does not mention Project Blue Book. As General Bolender said in his memo, “Moreover, reports of unidenti ed ying objects which could affect national security are made in accordance with JANAP (Joint Army, Navy, Air Force Publication) or Air Force Manual 55-11 and are not part of the Blue Book system.” is is the proof of that.

Of even more signi cance, it spel s out the way in which that material is to be col ected and has set up a special operation, Blue Fly, to get the material into the hands of those who could exploit it. And while descended foreign space vehicles suggests, in this case, the Soviet Union, and later anyone who was launching vehicles into space, it could also mean material of an extraterrestrial nature. e term “descended foreign space vehicles”

covered a range of possibilities.

It becomes even more speci c on page 3, in paragraph C, which said,

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“Peacetime employment of AFCIN intel igence team capability is provided

for in UFO investigation (AFR 200-2) and in support of Air Force Systems Command (AFSC) Foreign Technology Division (FTD) Projects Moon Dust

and Blue Fly. □ese three peacetime projects al involved a potential for employment of quali ed eld intel igence personnel on a quick reaction basis to recover or perform eld exploitation of unidenti ed ying objects, or know Soviet/Bloc aerospace vehicles, weapons systems, and/or residual components of such equipment.”

Although this document was labeled as a dra□ and it was never put into

operation in this form, it is clear that it was implemented in some fashion because other documents released through Freedom of Information showed

that there had been attempts at gathering the data. Released documents mention the recovery of a cone-shaped satel ite in Sudan on August 17, 1965, four objects that fel in Nepal on March 25, 1968, objects that were seen to “de-orbit” over New Zealand on April 7, 1972, and a very interesting one from Bolivia on May 6, 1978.

Stone, in his attempts to verify some of the information, eventual y contacted New Mexico Senator Jeff Bingaman, who queried the Air Force

about Moon Dust and Blue Fly. Lieutenant Colonel John E. Madison of the

Congressional Inquiry Division, Office of Legislative Liaison wrote, “□ere

is no agency, nor has there ever been, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, which would deal with UFOs or have any information about the incident in

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Roswel . In addition, there is no Project Moon Dust or Operation Blue Fly. □ose missions have never existed."

□e problem, of course, was that these projects and operations did exist

and there were a number of documents with the proper provenance to prove it, including several messages from the Department of State. While it might be argued that Madison didn't have the proper clearances to have access to the information, it can also be argued that someone should have told him the truth about it.

Bingaman went back to the Liaison Office with copies of the documents

that mentioned Moon Dust and Blue Fly. Now Colonel George M.

Mattingley, Jr., wrote, "□is is in reply to your inquiry in behalf of Mr.

Clifford E. Stone on the accuracy of the information we previously provided your office. Upon further review of the case (which was aided by the several attachments to Mr. Stone's letter), we wish to amend the statements contained in the previous response to your inquiry."

So the Air Force, through Mattingley, was now suggesting that the earlier letter had been in error which might have just been a mistake on the part of Madison or it might have been a deliberate distortion of the truth.

Mattingley continued, writing, "In 1953, during the Korean War, the Air Defense Command organized intel igence teams to deploy, recover, or exploit at the scene downed enemy personnel, equipment and aircra□. □e

unit with responsibility for maintaining these teams was located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. As the occasion never arose to use these defense teams, the mission was assigned to Headquarters, United

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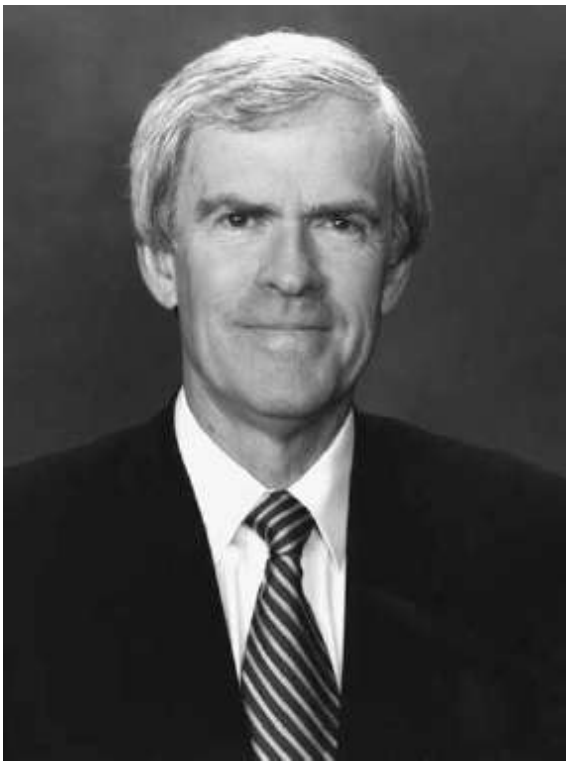
States Air Force in 1957 and expanded to include the fol owing peace-time functions:

a) Unidenti ed Flying Objects (UFOs), to investigate reliably reported UFOs within the United States;

b) Project MOON DUST, to recover objects and debris from space vehicles that had survived re-entry from space to earth;

c) Operation BLUE FLY, to expeditiously retrieve downed Soviet Bloc equipment."



U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman.

We have moved from the project and operation didn't exist to they existed. □is suggests that the information in the dra□ proposal was accurate, even if, as the Air Force claimed, that the proposal was never put into operation. It shows that the Air Force, to cover up the operation, no matter the reasoning, was not above supplying a United States senator with faulty information. But it goes further than that.

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Mattingley wrote, “□ese teams were eventual y disbanded because of a

lack of activity; Project MOON DUST teams and Operation BLUE FLY

missions were similarly discontinued.”

But this isn’t the whole truth either. □ese missions were deployed as several of the Moon Dust documents showed. For example, on the night of

March 25-26, 1968, four objects fel in the area of Nepal. □e American Embassy in Kathmandu, in a secret memo dated July 23, alerted the 1127th USAF Field Activities Group (which once had been the 4602d and the 1006th at Fort Belvoir) that they expected ful cooperation with the government of Nepal and the subject of the message was “Moon Dust.”

On May 6, 1978, three engineers with the Banco Minero Boliviano, along with a number of natives of the area, watched an elongated object, said to be about four meters in diameter, pass overhead. It crashed into the side of Cerro Taire with a huge explosion.

In a secret telegram sent to the Department of State, it was claimed,

“[□e case] has been checked with appropriate government agencies. No direct correlation with known space objects that may have reentered the earth’s atmosphere near May 6 can be made. However, we are continuing to examine any possibilities.”

According to “State Airgram A-6343 of July 26, 1973, which provided guidance for obtaining additional information, “In particular any information pertaining to the preimpact observations, directions or trajectory, number of objects observed, time of impact and a detailed description including markings would be helpful.”

Al this suggests that contrary to Mattingley’s statement, the teams were used. Worse stil is the response to another FOIA request by

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Todd. On July 1, 1987, the Air Force explained that the “nickname” Project Moon Dust no longer official y existed.

According to Colonel Phil ip E. □ompson, deputy assistant Chief of Staff, Intel igence, “It [Moon Dust] has been replaced by another name that is not releaseable. FTD’s [Foreign Technology Division] duties are listed in a classi ed regulation that is being withheld because it is currently and properly classi ed.”

What that says is that Moon Dust was not abandoned as the Air Force

suggested. It was the same old trick of changing the code name so that it could be said, truthful y, that no such project now exists. It is a way to disguise the truth. It was what they had done when Project Sign evolved into Project Grudge and when Grudge evolved into Project Blue Book. □ose operations were not ended, merely renamed.

Although the Roberston Panel had suggested in 1953 that the Air Force

quit investigating UFOs, that recommendation was not accepted. Although

there is documentation that many had tried to end the investigation because they believed nothing would come of it, they failed. Only a□er the Air Force

and the Condon Committee conspired to ignore evidence did the official, public investigation of UFOs by the Air Force, Project Blue Book, end.

But it was not the end of the investigation as the documents, letters, and investigation showed. As late as 1987, there was stil an investigation, but it was properly classi ed and there was no release of any information related to the investigation of UFOs.

□e Air Force said they were done with it, but clearly they were not.

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□ey just buried it more deeply.

The nature of UFO investigation, and the nature of the UFO conspiracy

as it exists today, is quite different from that of thirty and forty years ago. In the past we could point the nger at the government, at the Air Force, and at those unseen men and women working behind the scenes at

high levels. Today much of the conspiracy can be set at the feet of the UFO

community as they work to keep admitted hoaxes alive or create thousands of documents to prove their case of alien visitation and reject scienti c methods and objectivity.

Hoaxes □at Persist

While we attempt to nd the truth, there are others who care little for it.

□ey invent their tales of UFO sightings and government coverups. Others, seeing or hearing of a UFO sighting, begin to suggest they were involved in it. □ey spin wild tales, and while those tales are o□en spectacular, they are o□en not true. What they do is hide the real phenomenon in the middle of their lies. It makes it easy for the

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media, for science, and for others to ignore UFOs, believing that anyone reporting one is lying or deluded or both.

I have touched on some of the cases that are almost universal y considered to be hoaxes, but that reappear with frightening regularity. For example, the History Channel started a program cal ed UFO Hunters and the rst thing they investigated was the Maury Island hoax, though they didn't come at it from that direction. Instead they began from the point of view that there was something unusual about it that deserved further investigation. ey seemed to be unaware of al the controversy around it, that the two prime witnesses were less than reliable, the physical evidence the two men presented to Air Force officers was shown to be worthless slag, and that there was no solid evidence about the case to suggest anything other than hoax. Worse stil , two Air Force officers were kil ed in an aircra

accident that some have suggested as mysterious, maybe caused by aliens attempting to keep the mystery metal from being analyzed or by a re started by that very same metal. Because of aircra accident, Ed Ruppelt cal ed it the dirtiest hoax in UFO history.

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□e Florida Scoutmaster Case, Brie y

□ere are a few others like this tale. In 1952, at the height of that UFO

sighting wave, a Florida scoutmaster claimed that he had seen a UFO, approached close to it, and had been injured when a mysterious bal of re came from the cra□ and super cial y burned him. □e Air Force did investigate and learned that the man had a history of tel ing tales, that he had claimed to have been a ying sergeant with the Marines in World War

II, but in reality, had been dishonorably discharged in 1944. He hadn't been a ying sergeant.

□e culture of UFO conspiracists persists, with the help of a large community of believers all over the world. □e UFO-Fureaikan museum in Ino-machi,

Japan, is one of many such museums around the world.

To friends he told a tale of being dropped on a Japanese-held island to

spy on the enemy and had a story of a hairy rescue. But the man had never risen above PFC, and secret missions behind enemy lines require someone

with special skil s and special training, neither of which this man had. In the

end, the story must be rejected, but it stil pops up occasional y in UFO

books or on UFO blogs and websites.

As we moved into the end of the twentieth century, there were some fascinating new cases, each of which deserve some review. One of these new cases is most probably a hoax, one is a series of interesting sightings that have yet to be satisfactorily explained, and

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one is a combination of inexplicable observations and probable explanation.

Gulf Breeze, November 1987

On November 11, 1987, Ed Walters, a self-described prominent

businessman, was working in his home office in the early evening hours. He thought he saw something glowing behind a thirty-foot pine tree in the front yard. He stepped outside to get a better look and saw a top-shaped cra with a row of dark squares and smal er openings around the midsection. ere was a bright, glowing ring around the bottom.

Realizing that this was something very unusual, Walters reached into his office and grabbed an old Polaroid camera. He stepped back out and took a photograph as the cra moved from behind the tree. In al , he would take ve pictures that night as the UFO, about a hundred and y feet away, continued to dri northeasterly.

Just six days later, Walters visited Duane Cook, editor of the Gulf Breeze Sentinel. He showed Cook the pictures, but claimed, initial y, they had been taken by someone else. Walters gave Cook a letter al egedly written by the anonymous photographer explaining the situation. Two days later, on November 19, 1987, the letter and the pictures were published in the newspaper.

e next day, on November 20, as Walters returned home and as he walked in through the door, he heard a humming in his ears. At rst he hardly noticed it, but it grew in pitch until it was nearly unbearable. He walked through the house, fol owed by his wife, Frances, and then back outside. According to Walters, the hum was the same as what he heard during his rst encounter. ey saw nothing in the sky.

A er his wife and son le the house, Walters picked up his camera and

walked out the front door. Outside, he said, “I hear you, you bastard.” ere was a rush of air, and the internal voice said, “Be calm. Step

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forward.”

High overhead there was a speck of light that fel rapidly toward him. He took a picture of the UFO as it hovered above a power pole. While the voices were stil speaking to him, the UFO shot to the right and Walters took a second picture. About that time, the rst voice told him to take a step

forward so that he could enter the cra□. Walters told them they had no right to do what they were doing, and the voice said, “We have the right.”

□e female voice added, “You must do what they say. □ey haven’t hurt

us and we are going back home now.”

As the rst voice said, “We wil come for you now,” images of naked women l ed his mind. Walters took a third picture. □e UFO moved forward and then shot upward, into the sky, vanishing almost instantly.

He next saw the UFO on December 2, when he was awakened by the sound of a baby crying. Although there were no babies in either of the neighbors’ houses, or his own for that matter, Walters was upset. He then heard the voices, speaking Spanish, and talking about the crying baby.

Accompanied by his wife, Walters, carrying a .32 caliber pistol, checked the house and the yard. Out back, he saw the UFO descending rapidly. It stopped brie y about a hundred feet above the pool, then dri□ed a short distance before stopping again.

Walters retreated to the house to join his wife, who was seeing the cra□

for the rst time. Once again Walters grabbed his Polaroid camera and took it, along with his pistol, out the door. Near the pool in his backyard, he took another picture, but when the ash went off, he felt

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exposed. He ran back into the house. From the kitchen, he, along with his wife, saw the UFO

vanish. When it was gone, the hum inside his head faded.

As the first voice said, “We will come for you now,” images of naked women filled his mind.

Back in bed, Walters said he heard the dog bark once, which he said was

unusual. Walters again got up, and carrying both his pistol and camera, walked to the French doors, sure that he would see the UFO once again.

Instead, when he opened the curtains, he saw, just inches from him, a four-foot humanoid with big black eyes. It was wearing a helmet with a bit of transparent material at the eye level that apparently al owed it to see.

Walters, who seemed to have remained calm enough through his other

UFO experiences to take multiple photographs of the cra□, who disobeyed

their commands not to photograph the object, forgot about the camera in his hand. He screamed in surprise, jumped back, and tripped. Walters raised his pistol, thinking he would re if the creature tried to enter the house, but never thought to take a picture.

Walters nal y got to his feet and then struggled with the lock on the door. He put down his pistol and camera. □e creature retreated, but was no more than twenty feet away. Walters was sure that he could capture it. But as he opened the door and attempted to step out, he was struck by a blue beam.

It seemed that his foot was nailed to the oor. As the beam li□ed his leg, Walters grabbed at the side of the doorway for balance. Frances

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grabbed at him and pul ed on him. Both saw that the UFO was about □y feet in the

air, above the backyard.

With the UFO hovering over a nearby eld, Walters, now free of the blue

beam, again grabbed his camera and shot a picture of the UFO. He didn't

manage to photograph the alien being, but had the presence of mind to take stil another picture of the cra□. He saw the object shoot out another blue beam, and Walters believed this was to pick up the creature.

By December 17, he had taken seventeen photographs of the object. By

the end of December, Walters had gured out that videotape would be more impressive than stil photographs. On December 28, he made a videotape that ran just over a minute and a half. According to Walters, his wife, son Dan, and daughter al saw the object.

Over the next couple of weeks, Walters would see the UFO again and

take additional pictures of it. He would see more of the alien creatures, but strangely took no photographs of them.

On January 21, Walters was now working with friends to corroborate his

sightings. He was in communication on a walkie-talkie with Bob Reid who

was staked out a block away with a camera. Reid saw the lights that Walters reported, but he identi ed them as a smal aircra□. Walters said that Reid was not looking in the right direction to see the real UFO.

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At the end of February, the Mutual UFO Network provided Walters with

a special camera that had four lenses to take three-dimensional photographs. □e camera produced four negatives for each picture. It should

have made it possible to gather a variety of technical information about the object, based on measurements from the negatives. □at evening, Walters took more pictures of an object, or at least took pictures of lights in the distance in the night sky. Strangely, none of those pictures matched the spectacular nature of the other photographs that Walters had taken on other occasions using his Polaroid, meaning here that rather than an obvious structured cra□, he had only taken pictures of distant lights.

On March 8, Walters returned to a Polaroid camera, now using a newer

model. Again he took a picture of the UFO, this time hovering about three hundred feet beyond two pine trees. It was much better than the pictures of distant lights he had taken with the special, sealed camera, which could have provided precise technical data.

At the beginning of May, Walters, again alone, was in the park with a SRS camera when he heard the faint hum. □is time he shouted, “Here I am!

I want you out of my life!” As he attempted to photograph the object yet again there was a blinding ash and Walters lost al sensation except for a feeling that he was fal ing. About an hour later, he regained consciousness at the edge of the water. □is was the last alien encounter that Walters would report.

Because of the nature of the case, the number of sightings, potential corroborating witnesses, and the existence of so many photographs, a number of investigations were launched. Researchers from the J. Al

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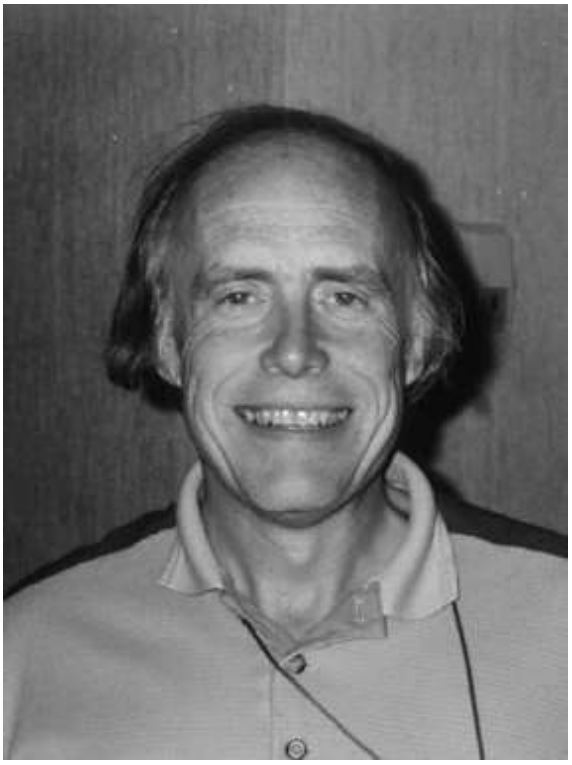
en Hynek Center for UFO Studies, including Robert D. Boyd, were convinced,

almost from the beginning, that the case was a hoax. Boyd felt that Walters did not react as someone who'd had six months of self-proclaimed horrifying UFO experiences would react. In fact, it was noted by Center investigators, that the only cases in which a witness claimed repeated encounters with multiple photographs were either known hoaxes or strongly suspected to be hoaxes.



Bruce Maccabee of the Fund for UFO Research.

On the other hand, the Mutual UFO Network's investigators, including

Don Ware and Charles Flannigan, were convinced that this was one of the

best cases to have been reported to date. Bruce Maccabee of the Fund for UFO Research was also convinced, based on his professional examination of the photographs, that Walters was tel ing the truth and that the pictures showed a real cra□ from another world.

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□ere were hints about the reality of the case. One of the rst to suggest that there was more to the Walters case than had been published was Tommy Smith. Around the rst of January 1988, Smith told family members

that he had seen a UFO and showed them a series of pictures he claimed to have taken. But about a day later, Smith confessed that the photos were part of a prank that Ed Walters, also known as Ed Hanson to those in the Gulf Breeze area, was playing.

According to an investigation conducted by Carol and Rex Salisberry, Smith told his family that Walters had given him the photos and told him to take them to the Gulf Breeze Sentinel. □ere, he was to claim that he had taken them. He also said that he had seen two UFO models at the Walters'

home and that he had seen Ed Walters photograph one of them. According to the report prepared by the Salisberrys, Smith said that Walters' wife, son, and another teenager named Hank Boland were al involved in the hoax.

Smith told family members that he didn't know what to do, but his father, Tom Smith, Sr., asked his law partners and then-Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, Jerry Brown, what his son should do. □ey al decided that the best action, at the moment, was no action. □ey believed, that since many people in Gulf Breeze already knew the pictures were part of a practical joke, the interest in them would die quickly.

Of course, that didn't happen. Interest in the photographs continued to

spread with national television audiences having a chance to see them. On June 19, 1988, Gulf Breeze mayor Ed Gray cal ed a press conference. Tommy Smith's account was substantiated by sworn testimony and independent interviews conducted with the principals.

Smith was given a number of tests in an attempt to verify his veracity.

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According to the Salisberrys, a recording of one of the interviews was made.

It was the opinion of a number of professionals that the recording could be used in a voice stress analysis. In a report dated October 10, 1990, Dale Kel y, in a signed statement for the Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, wrote, “At the request of and under the authority of Chief Jerry Brown of the Gulf Breeze Police Department, I analyzed a tape of a person known only as Chris [Tommy Smith] to me. □e subject matter was the taking of photos of

‘UFOs’ and if the photos were faked. Based on the test results, it is the opinion of this examiner that ‘Chris’ was tel ing the truth when he described how he was told how the photos were faked. In answer to al questions put to

‘Chris,’ in my opinion he was tel ing the truth.”

In a second report dated October 18, 1990, Ed Halford, in a signed statement for the Gulf Breeze Chief of Police, wrote, “I ran a test for the chief of police in Gulf Breeze, Fl., to determine the truthfulness of a statement made by a male identi ed as ‘Chris’ [Tommy Smith].… In my professional

opinion, the answers to al the questions asked of this person were truthful. I used the Mark II Voice Stress Analyzer to arrive at this conclusion.”

According to the massive report prepared by the Salisberrys, a□er their intense and exhaustive investigation, Craig Myers, a staff writer for the Pensacola newspaper, told of how a model of the UFO seen in the photographs was accidental y found. Walters had sold the house from which he had repeatedly seen the UFO. Myers, according to a statement in the report, went to interview the new owners on June 4, 1990.

Myers wrote, “During the interview Myers asked if they had ever seen or

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heard anything unusual, found any darkroom materials, models, etc. □e Menzers said they had found what may be construed as a UFO model, and

loaned it to the News Journal. During the next several days the model was used in an exhaustive series of photographic experiments."

Further down in the statement, Myers wrote, "Using the model we were

able to re-create photographs very similar to those Ed Walters printed in his book. Walters and his supporters have stated that the photographs are not the same because most of his UFOs had two rows of windows. However, a

second row of 'windows' can easily be re-created by drawing them on the

lower portion of the model."

In what is an important point, Myers wrote, "On Saturday, June 9, 1990,

News Journal Managing Editor Ken Fortenberry interviewed Walters in Fortenberry's office. Metro Editor Joedy Isert and reporter Nathan Dominitz witnessed the interview in which Walters denied any knowledge of the UFO

model, but refused to take either a lie detector test or a voice stress analysis conducted by independent experts. Walters did, however, sign a sworn statement denying any knowledge of the model. Walters said the model was obviously 'planted' in his former residence by debunkers, and intimated that the government may have been behind the debunking plan."

"Based on the test results, it is the opinion of this examiner that 'Chris'

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was telling the truth when he described how he was told how the photos

were faked."

It would seem, then, with the testimony of Tommy Smith, with the discovery of the model, and the misleading statements made about the case,

the only conclusion to be drawn is that the Gulf Breeze photographs and the accompanying story was little more than a hoax. But the supporters had their own version of the events. They insisted that there was a conspiracy to destroy the case. Solid investigation, corroboration from additional witnesses, and the shady background of those suggesting a hoax would prove to believers there was no hoax.

There were paral el events. Walters hadn't just taken pictures of UFOs,

but had also taken pictures of ghosts during teenage parties held at his house. These photographs taken during those parties is il ustrative of the mindset of Ed Walters. Again, according to the investigation conducted by the Salisberrys, "They said that Tommy [Smith] was aware of Ed's tricks and even was Ed's accomplice in a stunt…. In one instance of the stunt being played, a girl's name (obviously preselected) was also made to mysteriously appear on a board when a match was struck. According to several witnesses the girl was so scared by this that she ran from the room in tears. (Ed told Charles Flannigan, Rex, and myself that he had chosen Tommy to be in on

the stunt because Tommy was so quiet that no one would suspect him of being an accomplice.)"

Salisberry, attempting to corroborate these parties, investigated further and learned, again according to her report, "I asked one young woman if she had ever gone to a party at the Walters' home. Her reply surprised me. 'It was no party; it was a seance! I'm a Christian, and I was offended by what happened there and I never went back

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again.’ She explained that there was a pentagram or star on the oor and that Ed had 3 girls sit in the middle of a circle surrounded by the other guests. □en he read the 23rd Psalm backwards, having the kids recite a□er him. (Summoning the ghost for the Polaroid pictures of 3 individuals, one of which would be the chosen one.

□e chosen one would have the ghost in the picture with her.) □is girl’s brother, who was also present at this party, and some of the others I interviewed veri ed this…. □e kids, now al graduated from high school,

said that they couldn’t gure out how Ed did the pictures or some of his other tricks. □ose interviewed considered Ed to be very clever and that he seemed to know a lot of tricks and games…. Several of these witnesses who knew Danny … said that they thought it was unusual that Danny never spoke about the numerous UFOs that appeared at his house….”

□ere is also the testimony of a number of other teenagers who were there when some of the jokes were played or who saw the results of the trick Polaroid pictures. Some were offended by Walters’ seances, and others participated in his practical jokes. In other words, there was a great deal of corroboration for the fact that Walters played practical jokes and created pictures of ghosts using a Polaroid camera.

□ere is very good evidence, then, from a number of people, that Walters

used a Polaroid camera in the jokes he played on others. He created photographs of ghosts to fool the teenagers at these parties. A Polaroid camera was used to produce evidence that the seance had been real and that there were ghosts in the room. □is is al the result of double exposures, which demonstrate that Walters knew how to do it with spirits and means he could have done the same thing with UFOs.

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Proving that Polaroids can be used to fake photographs, those on Fact or Faked: □e Paranormal Files demonstrated a method of doing just that.

While none of the faked pictures on the show matched the detail of those taken by Walters, the point is that the closed Polaroid system can be defeated.

All the evidence seems to weigh against Walters. He stands alone against a large number of witnesses….

Carol Salisberry concluded, “Based on the information given in peer group interviews, it seems that the Walters had a variety of parties and also smal group gatherings at their home. □e same teens did not always attend the gatherings. Al the parties did not involve a mock seance or spooky tricks but there seems to have been several parties in 1986-87 where these things did take place and a ghost photo was taken. Most of the interviewed teens and parents stated that when the UFO pictures rst came out in the paper they thought it was just another of Ed’s jokes.”

Al the evidence seems to weigh against Walters. He stands alone against a large number of witnesses to his love of jokes, his ability to fake photographs with Polaroid cameras, and his attempts to induce others to

join in the jokes. Al of this makes a great circumstantial case suggesting the story is a hoax, but the diehard believers are always going to say it doesn’t prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt. Find real evidence that the pictures are faked.

□at nal test comes from an examination of the photographs that Ed

Walters claimed to have taken over a period of several months. Some had

suggested that if one was proven to be a hoax, then it could be claimed that al were a hoax. □at seems to be a valid theory. A□er al , if a man is taking photographs of a real object on a number of

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occasions, what purpose could be served by faking one? Instead of having twenty such pictures, he has only nineteen, which puts him way ahead of everyone except contactees.

One of the Ed Walters' pictures has been proved to be faked. Photograph

No. 19, which Walters claims to have taken from his truck, which clearly shows the hood of the truck, part of the road, and the UFO, is a hoax. □e photograph itself also shows a darkened sky, a treeline, and some other detail, seen at twilight. Several disinterested photographic analysts have used that picture to prove the point.

Early on in the investigation of the photographs, Bob Boyd tried to warn the MUFON investigator, among others, that there were problems with some of Ed Walters' pictures in general and Photograph No. 19 in particular.

On March 7, 1988, he wrote, "□e photographic evidence reveals certain inconsistencies which cause suspicion. One example is the state highway 191

B photograph [this is Photograph No. 19, which was taken as the object hovered over the highway] of the object a few feet above the road. □e re ection below the object on the pavement does not conform to proper physical features consistent with such re ections."

More importantly, Ray Sanford said that he had examined Photograph

No. 19 that had been "light blasted and enhanced for detail as published in Walters' book." He noticed that he could see the re ection of the treeline on the hood and believed that the re ection from the UFO il umination should also be visible, especial y when it is remembered that not only was there a light ring under the UFO, but porthole lights around the center and some sort of light on the top. Even if the light ring was too low to re ect in the

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hood of the truck, though there is debate about that, those other lights should have been re ected and they were not.

□at led to the suggestion that another analysis be performed. □e best

of the various independent analyses was completed by Wil iam G. Hyzer, with an assist from his son, Dr. James B. Hyzer. □eir investigation of Photograph No. 19 revealed, "□ere was no UFO present and the photo is a

product of multiple exposure techniques."

To put al this in context without resorting to minor detail that is unimportant, it must be said that a number of experiments were performed on the road. □e Salisberrys, among others using various light sources, distances, and a truck similar to the one owned by Walters, established an

"envelope" of distances, heights above the road, and de ections right or le□

of the truck. Inside the envelope there would have been a re ection in the truck's hood. According to al the information available, the UFO, as wel as the lights on it, fel inside the envelope. In other words, given the location, time of day, and evidence as available on Photograph No. 19 itself, there would have been a light re ection on the hood of the truck if a UFO had

been hovering over the road. □at there was not was the conclusive evidence that Photograph No. 19 was a double exposure and therefore a hoax.

Hyzer, in his report, wrote, "It is this author's professional opinion that the results of this study are conclusive: if the UFO-like object in photograph number 19 had been real, re ections of luminous sources associated with the dome and dome light at the top of the object would have to be visible in the truck's hood; but they are not."

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□e conclusions for the case are obvious to al but the true believers. Ed Walters, playing a somewhat admitted practical joke, found himself the center of attention, and he loved it. □e fact that there was nothing to the sightings meant nothing to him. He grabbed the spotlight as quickly as he could, and has done everything possible to stay in it. But his story, from the very beginning, was a hoax.

□e Belgium Sightings, 1989

So, it seems that the Gulf Breeze sightings and photographs taken by Ed Walters are a hoax. But there have been other, very good sightings in which there is no evidence of a hoax. □e events are real. It is the interpretation of those events that is in dispute.

Al the accounts of the Belgium wave of UFO reports begin by

mentioning the rst sightings of a triangular-shaped object on November 29, 1989. Keep that in mind because the triangular shape wil become important in another series of sightings. More than 120 people, including 13

police officers, were among the witnesses around Eupen, Belgium. □e object, with shining lights, was seen at close range. Although it was multiple witness, it was little more than nocturnal lights. It did, however, mark the beginning of a series of sightings that would produce some interesting and impressive evidence.

Just two days later, Francesco Valenzano was driving through Ans in Liege province when his daughter shouted that he should look up. In the sky above them was a large, triangular-shaped object that dri□ed along slowly, just above the buildings of the town square. Final y it ew off toward another vil age.

Valenzano, it should be noted, was an Air Force meteorological

specialist. On December 11, a Belgian army lieutenant colonel, Andre Amond, while driving with his wife spotted a slow-moving, strangely-lighted object at low altitude. Amond stopped the car so that he could

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get a good look at the object. It ashed a beam of light at him and began to approach. His wife began to shout, wanting to get out.

Amond said that the object then departed rapidly. He later told investigators that he had been impressed by the slowness with which the object moved original y, and then its speed as it ashed away in moments.

□e object made no noise as it maneuvered.

□e day a□er Amond's sighting, and in response to the growing wave,

the Eupen police and SOBEPS (Belgian Society for the Study of Spatial Phenomena) held a press conference in Brussels. Also at the press

conference were Belgian Air Force officers who would be investigating the sightings and Guy Coeme, the Belgium Defense Minister.

No solutions for the sightings were offered. □e purpose of the conference was to inform the media about the sightings and let them know what was to be done. It was the rst time that anyone with the Belgium Ministry of Defense had spoken out on the topic of ying saucers.

In the sky above them was a large, triangular-shaped object that dri□ed

along slowly….

Not long a□er the press conference, one of the daily newspapers in that

area printed a story suggesting the UFOs were actual y American-own F-

117As. □e article suggested that these were secret test ights and that the explanation had come from Washington. Although the F-117 bore

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a slight

resemblance of the triangular UFO, it could not dri□ along slowly and the pattern of lights reported didn't match those on the aircra□.

Augste Meessen, a professor of physics at the Catholic University at Louvain, investigated the explanation, learning that it hadn't come from Washington as the reporter had claimed, but from Finland. A writer for Het Laatste Nieuws said that he had just read an article about the F-117 and had wanted to inform his readers about the strange aircra□. To make the article interesting, he had suggested that the recent UFO sightings in Belgium might have been caused by the Stealth Fighter. He had no inside knowledge, just his wild speculation. Other newspapers grabbed the explanation and ran with it rather than checking it rst, which in the world of ying saucers isn't al that unusual.

Lieutenant Colonel Wilfried De Brouwer, the Chief of Operations of the

Belgian Air Force, told Meessen that they had sought help from the American Embassy in an attempt to nd solutions for the sightings. Had the F-117 been the culprit in the sightings, De Brouwer would have been told about the ights prior to them being made. □e U.S. Air Force does not routinely invade the airspace of a friendly, foreign nation without alerting that nation to its presence.

On December 12, 1989, despite the negative press, a man was awakened by a throbbing sound that he at rst believed to be a circulation pump. He grabbed a ashlight and headed out toward the boiler. When he shut down

the pump, he could stil hear the noise.

As soon as he stepped outside, his attention was drawn to an oval-shaped object between two r trees. In the bright light of the moon, he could see the object clearly. □ere were smal lights around the

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perimeter that changed color from blue to red and back to blue. □e object was metal ic

looking. At the front was a window or porthole of some kind.

A□er a few minutes, the object rose slightly and the sound coming from

it changed in pitch. Dri□ing toward a meadow, it began shining searchlight-like beams under it. □e object then disappeared behind a house but a moment later a wel -de ned, bright light shot into the sky. □e witness was too frightened to investigate. Instead he returned to his own house.

Unlike so many others who saw the strange objects at that time, this man reported his sighting to the police. A search of the elds conducted by the police, and the Belgium army, turned up a giant circular area looking as if the grass had been cut by a lawn mower. □ere were also traces of some sort of yel ow material on the grass.

□ere were others who later claimed they too heard the noise from the

cra□ but who didn't go out to investigate. A reporter, living in the area, said that he had been awakened by a bright light outside but thought it was one of his own lights and rol ed over to go back to sleep.

□e most spectacular of the sightings, and the ones that received the widest press decimation, occurred on the evening of March 30 and the early morning of March 31, 1990. It had been suggested that when there were reliable sightings of the triangular-shaped object, the Belgian Air Force would respond with American-made F-16 ghters. When several police officials and a host of other civilian witnesses reported seeing the object, the ghters were dispatched.

□e fighters locked on to the target three times that night, but each time the UFO evaded them.

According to one published account, though the ghter pilots made no visual contact with the UFO, the onboard radars did "lock on" to a

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target. It moved slowly, only about twenty- ve miles an hour, but then would accelerate at fantastic speeds. It was reported to have dropped from an altitude of 7,500 feet to 750 feet in about one second.

□e ghters locked on to the target three times that night, but each time the UFO evaded them. Eventual y both the UFO and the ghters le□ the area. SOBEPS representatives are stil unsure of what happened that night, but did express praise for the Belgian Air Force for its honesty in reporting the incident.

A month later there was a close approach of an object near Stockay, Belgium. On May 4, 1990, a respected archaeologist walked outside to close his greenhouse door and heard the dogs in the neighborhood howling. As

he returned to the house, he saw a huge object with a clearly de ned outline in a eld about ve hundred feet from him.

He tried to alert his neighbors, but they were not home. Instead he told his wife and together they saw, at the front of the house, a cone-shaped object with a top that was mushroom-like in appearance.

A□er watching it for a number of minutes, his wife returned to the house. He went with her and then decided to take another look. He walked along his eld and saw the object was only 100 to 150 feet away.

□e object made no noise. □e bottom was bright and opaque, the center

was white, and the edges were yel owish. □e cra□ seemed to be twenty- ve to thirty feet in diameter at the base and was about □een to eighteen feet high.

□e mushroom tip, at the top of the object, detached and began to climb.

As it did, it turned a bright orange. A□er a few moments, the mushroom descended, reattached itself at the top, and the colors

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returned to their original shades.

Unable to nd any other people to witness the event, the archaeologist

returned to his house where his wife waited. □ey watched the UFO for a

few more minutes, then went back inside.

□eir son went to to spot of the encounter the next day. He found, and videotaped, four circular ground traces in a rectangular shape about twenty-ve by thirty feet. □e grass in each of the circular marks was twisted and depressed. A ne, yel owish powder was found on the blades of grass.

In October 1990, with the stealth explanation ruined by uncooperative

Belgian and American officials, a new explanation was trotted out by a French magazine. Now, it wasn't a stealth aircra□, but some other experimental aircra□, own by American pilots without notifying the Belgian Air Force that such ights would take place. Of course, there is absolutely no evidence that any American aircra□, stealth, experimental, or otherwise, were involved in the Belgian sightings. □e French were just not wil ing to let go of what, to them, was a good explanation for the sightings.

Besides, they got to blame the Americans as an added bonus.

In fact, in October 1990 there were more and better sightings taking place. On Sunday, October 21, two residents of Bastogne were returning home late when two lights appeared, descending toward them. Echoing the

words shouted by another Belgian witness, one of them screamed, "□ey're

coming for us!"

□ey lost sight of the object for a few moments, but it reappeared, now

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behind a hedge bordering the right side of the road. □ey thought it might be a re ection on the car window, but when the window was cranked down,

the light was stil there, no more than □y feet from the car.

As they drove along, the object seemed to pace them, staying with them.

As they slowed and stopped, so did the object. When they accelerated, the light did the same. When they reached the end of the roadside hedge, they stopped. □ey could see a dark mass, more than forty- ve feet in diameter. It climbed rapidly and silently into the sky. On the bottom was a ring of seven or eight lights.

Less than forty-eight hours later, at about 5:30 in the morning on October 23, a young woman identi ed only as Regine was awakened by her

alarm clock. □rough the window of her residence on the outskirts of Athus, near Luxembourg, she saw two bright lights hovering over a hil about a

quarter of a mile away. Between the two bright lights was a smal er, dimmer blue light.

Ten minutes later, the lights rose into the sky and began dri□ing toward her silently. □e lights passed over her house and she ran into the dining room where she could again see the object. She noticed that there was a smal red light on the lower part of the object.

□e lights kept moving in the direction of Athus. □ey then veered to the

le□, in the direction of Luxembourg, and disappeared. □ere were apparently no other witnesses to the event.

Later that same day, that is, October 23, four teenagers saw an object that came from behind a hil . It was about a quarter mile away

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and had a number of extremely bright lights on the lower part of it that were directed toward the ground. Centered among these lights was a smal er, dimmer light. □ey believed that the object was taking off because of the low altitude when they rst spotted it.

□is cra□ was shaped like a pyramid with the apex pointing to the front.

At the base were two more red lights. □e object was in sight for about thirty seconds and disappeared behind another hil .

Another sighting was made of a cra□ quite close to the ground. On November 22, 1990, at the vil age of Fluerus, a young woman was lying in bed when an intense light penetrated the room. She got out of bed, wiped the frost from the glass, and saw that the bright light was coming from behind a neighbor's wal . Although the light wasn't more than a hundred feet away, it was just behind the wal and in an abandoned eld. As the light dimmed, she noticed blue ashes from that area. When a train rumbled through, the last of the lights dimmed and vanished.

□e UFO was … about two hundred fi□y feet long and forty to fi□y feet

high. □e underside bulged outward and was dark gray.

□e sightings continued. On December 9, more than a year a□er the rst

of the reports, another couple traveling by car saw an object. At rst it seemed to be a glowing triangle. □en, watching through one of the car's

windows, they saw a huge, circular plate over the tops of a group of trees.

Around the edge were bright white lights. □ere were also four spokelike lines that were a glowing brass color.

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□e UFO was about one hundred and □y feet in the air. Although they

wanted to stop the car, because of traffic, they were unable to do so. □ey lost sight of it quickly.

□e end of 1990 brought no respite. On January 6, 1991, two separate

groups of witnesses saw a low- ying circular plate. □e rst group also reported they had seen a cupola on the top. □ere were many lights on the object.

Minutes later, another group reported they saw three lights to the le□ of the road. □ey, at rst, believed it to be the lights from a soccer eld. □ey noticed, however, that the lights were on something hovering over a quarry.

□e UFO was, according to one witness, about two hundred □y feet long and forty to □y feet high. □e underside bulged outward and was dark gray. Fi□een portholes on the side were lighted. □e rear was at and seemed to have some ns.

□e press lost interest in the sightings as they continued. □e stories were al becoming the same. Witnesses were seeing brightly lighted, mostly triangular-shaped objects, oating silently above the ground. □ere were no real examples of physical evidence le□ behind and the few photographs taken provided no proof of the visitation and contained no real detail.

SOBEPS reported that the reports were not just lights in the night sky.

□ese sightings were of objects quite close to the ground with the witnesses, in many cases, not far away. □ey were receiving good, detailed descriptions.

□e only difference was that the media were no longer interested in the reports.

One Belgian newspaper recklessly suggested that Washington had

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“con rmed” the reports of stealth aircra in the skies over Belgium. Clearly there was no such con rmation. e reporter should have checked those facts, rather than accepting them as true because that is what he wanted to believe.

e one thing that came from the Belgian sightings was the governmental cooperation. Rather than bury the details in a classi ed study that would be released in parts over the next decades, the Belgian Air Force was quite candid. ey assisted researchers trying to nd explanations for the series of sightings.

e real point here, however, is that we had a wave of sightings in Belgium in the early 1990s. Hundreds saw the cra and reported it. Belgian Air Force ghters attempted one intercept. e evidence for the sightings is the same as it has always been, witness testimony. Can the judgments of these witnesses be trusted, or is there something that creates a mob psychology so that normal y rational people believe they are seeing ying saucers in the night sky.

e sightings, according to SOBEPS, have slowed and virtual y

disappeared. ere are a few stil made, but not with the regularity of the early part of the decade. What is le is a core of interesting reports that suggest something invaded the airspace over Belgium, and other countries, but there is no evidence that the cra were real or extraterrestrial.

e Phoenix Lights, 1997

e rst of the reports began just a er eight o’clock on the evening of March 13. A former police officer said that he and his family had seen a strange cluster of lights in the night sky near Paulden, Arizona. It looked to be a “V”

formation of red-orange bal s of light. During the next several days, dozens of others reported to have seen the same thing about the same time.

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Similar reports were also made from the Prescott and Prescott Val ey areas, about □y miles north of Phoenix. □e witnesses there saw very bright white lights in a triangular-shaped formation. □ere were those who suggested, however, that they, too, had seen red lights in a triangular formation.

Others reported those lights as they moved from northern Arizona to

southern, a distance of about two hundred miles in about thirty minutes.

Simple calculation showed that the object, objects, or lights were moving at about four hundred miles an hour. □at certainly is not outside the realm of conventional aircra□ and is a fact that might become very important as the investigation continued.

And that might be the solution to, or perhaps part of, the problem. An

amateur astronomer interviewed for the New Times by Tony Ortega, an independent newspaper in Phoenix, said that he had seen the lights in the sky and trained his telescope on them. Tim Printy, a skeptic who specializes in UFO reports (now that Phil Klass is no longer with us), saw that article, and according to what he posted on his website:

In May of 1997, I contacted one of the Phoenix area astronomy clubs and received a report that one of their members saw the formation in his telescope and noted they were distant, high- ying aircra□. I had no other data to go on until an article showed up in the Phoenix Newstimes [sic]. □is identi ed Mitch Stanley, a young amateur astronomer, who saw the light formation through his telescope that night.

In part the article, which was titled □e Great UFO Coverup, stated, “Mitch Stanley, 21, spends several nights a week in his backyard with a 10-inch telescope, exploring the night sky. He’s owned the telescope for about a year, and has learned the sky wel . With its 10-inch mirror, the telescope gathers

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1,500 times as much light as the human eye. And with the eyepiece Stanley was using on the night of March 13, the telescope gave him 60 times the resolving power of his naked eye.

“□at night Mitch and his mother, Linda, were in the backyard and noticed the lights coming from the north. Since the lights seemed to be moving so slowly, Mitch attempted to capture them in the scope. He succeeded, and the leading three lights t in his eld of vision. Linda asked what they were. ‘Planes,’ Mitch said.

“It was plain to see,” he says. What looked like individual lights to the naked eye actual y split into two under the resolving power of the telescope. □e lights were located on the undersides of squarish wings, Mitch says. And the planes themselves seemed smal , like light private planes.

“Stanley watched them for about a minute, and then turned away. It was the last thing the amateur astronomer wanted to look at. ‘□ey were just planes, I didn’t want to look at them,’ Stanley says when he’s asked why he didn’t stare at them longer. He is certain about what he saw: ‘□ey were planes. □ere’s no way I could have mistaken that.’“

Printy found one other witness, not associated with Stanley, who had seen much the same thing. Printy interviewed him as wel and posted the

results to his website. He wrote:

□e rst witness was a man named Rich Contry who was driving west that evening on I-40 north of Prescott. His statement was in the March Postings of the Area 51 message boards and is completely ignored by the investigators. □e date of his e-mail is 17 March and he states, “I was on my way from Flagstaff to Laughin □ursday when I saw the light formation reported on the radio the other night. I’m a pilot and was in the u.s. air force 4 years. Being in the mountains on highway 40, the night was clear and stil . As the formation came towards me I stopped my car and got out with my binocs to check out

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what this was. As it came towards me, I saw 5 aircra with there running lights (red and green) and the landing lights (white) on. ey were also ying fairly slow and in the delta formation. As they went over me I could see stars going between the aircra so it could not have been one large ship. e ying was like that of the Blue Angels or the thunderbirds demo team. Also as they went by their jets were not very loud because of the low throttle setting for ying slow but I did hear the jets as they went away towards the south.

ere were those who claimed to have seen a triangular-shaped object, and others who claimed to have seen individual lights in a trianguler….

However, there was another set of sightings that took place in and around the Phoenix area and which resulted in a videotape. ese lights were not a group of planes; they seemed to be ying by in a rigid formation until they began to wink out one at a time. ese were the lights, and the videotape, that inspired the investigations.

e videotape, shown on national television, was analyzed using a number of impressive computer arrays and some very sophisticated so ware. e conclusions drawn by those analysts and supported by their

computers was that the lights seen over Phoenix were not natural and did not exhibit any of the features of manufactured lights. In other words, they were unique.

e Air Force was queried about it and the official spokesman said that

the Air Force no longer investigated UFO sightings. Most people in Phoenix didn’t accept that as an answer. ey believed that the Air Force was hiding the truth, but this is the standard Air Force response. ey haven’t investigated UFO sightings since 1969.

Others, including private researchers, began col ecting the stories of the lights that had moved across Arizona, some of those investigators

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believing that the sightings were al related. □ere were those who claimed to have seen a triangular-shaped object, and others who claimed to have seen individual lights in a trianguler, or “V”-shaped formation. Some thought the lights were white, others red, and stil others saw faded colors in the lights.

Couple the hundreds of witnesses to the formation of lights that were videotaped over Phoenix and an impressive case begins to emerge. □en, eliminate most of those sightings because of Air Force con rmation of night ight activities over Arizona on March 13, and the report from the amateur astronomer, Mich Stanley, and Rich Contry. Officers at Luke Air Force Base, near Phoenix, reported they did track a ight of high- ying jets over the Phoenix area at the times in question. □at tends to corroborate the

observations of the amateur astronomer. Suddenly everything is back to, and surrounding, the Phoenix videotapes.

□e analysis of the tape, performed by Vil age Labs in Arizona, suggested that the lights were not ares. But the analysis conducted had little scienti c legitimacy. It was, in fact, little more than smoke and mirrors, which looked impressive, but that meant nothing.

Other analysis, however, suggested that the lights were ares. Although

the local Air Force units said they had nothing airborne on March 13 that would drop ares, they weren’t the only units using the ring ranges. A squadron from the Maryland Air National Guard was using the range that

night, and their planes did drop ares. □e confusion came about because

they were not located in Arizona and it was several days before anyone thought to ask them about ares.

In fact, most of this comes from asking the wrong questions.

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Investigators and reporters cal ed the local Air Force base and asked if they had anything ying that night. □ey answered that they did not, which was the truth. □ose local spokesmen or women didn't know what other units

might be doing, might not have even realized that Maryland Air Guard was there, and certainly were not involved in the Air Guard's training mission.

Later, when further inquiries revealed the presence of the Air Guard aircra□, the right questions could be asked. Yes, the Air Guard dropped ares over the ring range to the southwest of Phoenix.

□ose at Vil age Labs, as wel as others, said they had observed are drops on other occasions but this didn't match. □ere was even an impressive bit of computer analysis that broke the wavelength of light into a basic spectrum, or so it was claimed. A graph showed the differences between are light and those images on the videotape. To some this proved that whatever had been videotaped over Phoenix was not ares.

Others did simpler comparisons. A Phoenix television station

videotaped ares and compared them to the Phoenix lights. □ey could nd

no differences in the two tapes. Maybe not the most scienti c of analyses, but one that did suggest an explanation.

But those with the knowledge of the technology used to analyze the are said that al that was being charted was the difference in brightness between the ares on the videotape of the UFO and a videotape of a are drop. In fact, using a different point on the videotape of the UFO provided differences in the graph. In other, less complicated words, it was a difference in brightness and not a difference in composition as claimed. □e analysis proved nothing other than that different points on the videotape would give differences in brightness.

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□e problem with the are theory, according to many, was that the lights

appeared to be over Phoenix, and not over the range. Certainly the Air Force wouldn't be dropping ares over the city, where they could start res and kil people. Witnesses said that the objects were in front of the mountains, not beyond it.

Another analysis, this one using a bit of videotape taken in the daylight, provided what might be the nal clue. Looking across the val ey, there are a number of mountainous ridges. Beyond those mountains are the ranges used for gunnery practice and for dropping ares. □ose ranges were to the southwest of Phoenix, just as were the lights on the videotape.

When the videotapes are superimposed, so that the mountains are

"visible" at night and the UFO's lights are seen to be hanging in the sky before they wink out, an interesting thing is revealed. □e lights, apparently descending very slowly, disappear behind the mountains. □ey don't burn out or wink out until they fal behind the mountains.

A Phoenix television station videotaped flares and compared them to

the Phoenix lights. □ey could find no differences in the two tapes.

What this means, clearly, is that the objects were ares, dropped on the range. It was the mountains, invisible at night and invisible on the videotape, that caused the lights to fade one at a time.

□at is the explanation for the best of the videotapes made that night.

□ere are, however, others. Five others. □e objects on these tapes are not as

sharp or as bright. □ese tapes were made between 8:30 and 10:00 when the ares were dropped.

What this means is that there were other things seen that night. □e slow- ying aircra□ observed by Stanley and Con-try and the ares

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later do not account for these other tapes. Each show multiple objects.

Unfortunately, the tapes are of poor quality, which is probably a re ection of the brightness of the lights and the capabilities of the cameras. If we had better evidence to work with, we might be able to explain those tapes as wel .

Phoenix Lights, Part II, 1999

Jim Kel y, of the Arizona MUFON group based in Phoenix, has

investigated a number of spectacular UFO reports that began with the mass sightings of March 13. As o□en happens in UFO research, some of those cases, under proper investigation, have been solved as natural phenomena or as conventional aircra□. Others have de ed careful scrutiny and remain unidenti ed.

One of the best of the unidenti ed, according to what Kel y told me, involved two police officers in a helicopter who had seen a strange green light in the distance on October 12, 1999. □ey said it was about twice the size of Venus, very bright, and might have been as much as four miles away from them. □ey did not see an object behind the light, but they made some intriguing observations. □e officers were surprised and upset by what they saw because neither had seen anything like it before that night.

□e light seemed to respond when they turned the helicopter upward toward it. □e light climbed suddenly, stopped, and then hovered. Both officers could see that it was rotating in some fashion. □e smooth maneuvers performed by the light suggested to the officer that they were watching something under intel igent control rather than a natural phenomenon.

□e pilots wondered if they were picking up a re ection from the instrument panel, but quickly eliminated that explanation by observing the light through the open doors on the side of their aircra□. □is gave

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them a clear view without the obstruction of the plexiglass windshield or ashing of the rotor blades.

As they watched the light, the officers tried to contact other helicopters in the area and people on the ground. ey wanted to nd additional witnesses with different perspectives that would give them valuable information about the light. Unfortunately, the individuals they reached couldn't see what they saw.

e light maneuvered a number of times, seemed to reverse its course

more than once, climbed, and descended. Kel y ruled out a bal oon-borne

ight, as there was virtual y no wind that night, according to weather records. Had the light been attached to a bal oon, it might have risen slowly or seemed to hover, but it would not have maneuvered up and down the way police officers described.

Kel y, being as thorough as possible in his investigation, contacted the local FAA searching for reports of radar contact with the light, but according to the limited information he was able to gather, there was no reported contact. However, in today's world the lack of radar contact means nothing.

Stealth technology has rendered the radar argument moot.

e police officers believed that the light was several miles from them

but they couldn't be sure. ey were looking up at it, with no reference points around it. at means, simply, the light could have been much closer and much smal er than they thought, or it could have been much farther away and much larger. ey real y had no way of knowing.

ey were dispatched to a police cal and had to leave the area. When

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they returned, the light had disappeared. According to Kel y's report, the officers watched the light for ten to twelve minutes. □at provided them with ample time to identify it, if there had been a mundane explanation for it.

Clearly, the officers saw something, and that observation disturbed them. But in the nal analysis, al they saw was a bright light that seemed to react to them, spinning several miles away. □is is the classic nocturnal light and nothing more than that.

Needles, California, May 14, 2008

If there is a case that leads to various conspiracies, this reported UFO crash close to Las Vegas is the one. □at is, if you de ne a conspiracy as two or more people working together. □ere is nothing evil about it, as far as I can see, but it does demonstrate the world in which we live.

According to various eyewitnesses, none of whom have been seriously

chal enged as unreliable or delusional, early on the morning of May 14, 2008, they had seen a aming object, traveling relatively slowly, fal from the sky, cross the river, and crash into vacant land.

One of the witnesses, known only as Bob, said that a glowing, turquoiseblue-green object appeared high in the sky and headed toward him. It passed over his houseboat and he thought it might be on re. He said that he saw it hit the ground on the far side of the Colorado River and heard the sound of the impact.

Frank Costigan, who lives about three miles east of the river, said that he had gotten up about three in the morning to let the cat out. He saw the glowing object ash overhead. He said the colors were turquoise and blue and green. He said that he didn't hear it hit and he had lost sight of it when it disappeared behind a hil .

Not long a□er the object disappeared, Bob said that ve helicopters, ying in formation, including a large one he identi ed as a CH-54 Sky

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Crane, ew over toward the crash site. □e crane picked up the object, stil glowing, and took it away, heading toward Las Vegas. According to Bob, the helicopters arrived within twenty minutes of the crash.

George Knapp.

George Knapp, an investigative reporter for a Las Vegas TV station, got

involved, interviewing the witnesses. He spoke with Bob, and said that he, of course, knew Bob's ful name. He talked to people at the Needles airport and learned that a number of black aircra□ had been on the tarmac there. He

was also convinced that what fel near Needles was not an alien cra□, but some sort of test vehicle.

Needles is not al that far from Las Vegas, and Las Vegas is not al that far from Area 51. Area 51 is, at the very least, the place where the next generation of military aircra□ is tested. □ere have been some stunning sightings around Area 51, but then, some of the aircra□,

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when nal y unveiled, are stunning. From certain angles, for example, the F-117 can look like a domed disc, and the B-2 bomber is anything but conventional y shaped.

What fel near Needles is most likely something that was being tested and somehow that test roamed off the ranges and test areas. It was clearly being watched by someone because of the quick response of the military; the fact that there is no one else who could have responded that quickly with

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USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED
AREA 51

that array of aircra suggests this. It is a conspiracy to keep the object, aircra, whatever it was, hidden from the public and that is not always a bad thing, especial y when it is a test of a new technology.

But Knapp talked of another aspect of this. He, with his crew, were driving the highways around Needles when they spotted a convoy of black

vehicles traveling together. ese were large SUVs and clearly al belonged to the same agency, whether governmental or someone else. Knapp and his boys fol owed them to see what would happen.

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Sign that was posted outside of Area 51 warns people to keep away.

What happened was one of the vehicles pul ed over and when Knapp and his crew pul ed in with them, they learned most of the truth. It was a government convoy, they were operating under the authority of the government, and deadly force was authorized. But they had nothing to do

with the object that fel . □eir mission was something else.

Not long a□er that Knapp received a telephone cal from the Department

of Energy and was invited by the agency to see some of its facilities and training. He learned that the mission was nothing al that nefarious. □e

dark vehicles are o□en on the roads around Needles and they have nothing to do with UFOs.

So there was the second conspiracy. A Department of Energy mission that was vaguely de ned, but to the satisfaction of Knapp. □ey do travel around on their classi ed missions.

Conspiracies Continue

As we have seen, there are al sorts of conspiracies. □ere are those by government agencies to keep information hidden, o□en with good reason,

and there are those that keep information hidden for no apparent reason.

□ere have been projects and plans to hide information and there have been others who have conspired to release it.

□e one truth here is that there have been conspiracies on al sides. □e

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government continues to deny and hide, and UFO researchers to promote a

particular point of view. □ere have been conspiracies to trick people into releasing information and conspiracies to prevent them from tel ing.

About the only solid truth is that conspiracies exist. Most are benign.

Most are little more than a few people working for what they believe is a good cause. But there are some that have much more nefarious purpose, and these al need to be exposed.

As you move around, think about this. We can prove the government hid information about UFOs. It is spel ed out in the documents. It is underscored by the various projects. Why are they doing it? What do they hope to gain by it?

□e one truth here is that there have been conspiracies on al sides. □e

government continues to deny and hide, and UFO researchers continue to

promote and expose a particular point of view. □ere have been conspiracies to trick people into releasing information and conspiracies to prevent them from tel ing al that they knew.

About the only solid truth is that conspiracies exist today. Most of them are benign. Most are little more than a few people working for what they believe is a good cause or in the national interest. Some are by people who shouldn’t be trusted at al and who are working only in their own self-interest. But there are some conspiracies that have much more nefarious purposes and are much more wide-ranging. □ese need to be exposed for

the bene t of al .

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As you move around in this bizarre world, think about this: We can prove the government hid information about UFOs. It is spel ed out in the

documents. It is underscored by the various projects that were once classi ed and some of which that are stil hidden. We can prove there has been a manipulation of the data, sometimes in not very clever ways. We can prove that some government officials have lied about what they knew.

□e questions are these: “Why are they doing it?” “What do they hope to

gain by it?”

We could also ask, “What harm is this secrecy doing?” and “Can we do

anything about it?”

When we gure out the answers, we o□en realize there is very little that we can do, and sometimes very little we should do. Maybe the best solution to al this is to just go out and have a good time. At least that way we get some bene t out of what we are doing.

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